12042

THE RETVRNE OF PRAYERS.

A TREATISE

VVHEREIN this Case [*How to discerne Gods answers to our prayers*] is briefly resolved,

WITH

OTHER OBSERVATIONS UPON PSAL. 85.8. concerning GODS *speaking* PEACE, &c.

BY THO: GOODVVIN. B.D.

HAB. 2. 1.

I will watch to see what he will say to me.

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TO
THE MUCH
HONOVRED
KNIGHT,

SIR

NATHANIEL RICH.

SIR,

GOD, *who from all eternitie hath had an infinite Masse of grace and glory lying by him, to bestow upon his Church: and did accordingly provide a treasury and Magazin sufficient*

cient wherein to ſtore up all, [the Boſome of his Son:] Ephes. 3 8. *in whom are* hid, riches *ſo* unſearchable, *as cannot be told over, much leſſe ſpent to all eternity.*

Hee hath as richly ſhed his holy Spirit on us: that wee, who *could never have* known *of any thing bequeathed us, nor* what to pray for as wee ought, *might both fully from him* know all that God hath given us; *and through him lay claime thereto,* who maketh interceſſion for us; *and ſo doth furniſh us with a privy key to all that Treaſury, which otherwiſe, is faſt ſhut up to all the world.* πλουτίωε. Tit. 3. 6.

Through which Spirit of Prayer, *and* ſupplications

ons *thus* powred forth, *believers come to bee at once* anointed to the fellowship, *and execution of those three glorious Offices of* Christ *their head. Not onely* [1] *of* Priests; *by* offering up *their prayers*, as spirituall sacrifices, acceptable to God, through Jesus Christ: *but* [2] *of* Kings; to rule with God, *Hos.* 11. 12. *Being hereby made of Privy Councell to the King of Kings, so as* their Counsels, *and desires expresst in* their petitions, *are said to* be fulfilled; *and* their decrees *in their* Prayers made, *ratified, and* establisht. *Nay further, by vertue of this priviledge, advanced to such height of favour,*

Ps. 20. 4, 5.

Iob 22. 27, 28.

vour, as by their ſtrength *in prayer alone,* to have power with God *himſelfe*; *and not onely with him, but alſo* over him; *and* in their wreſtlings tō prevaile: *Yea to command: Himſelfe hath ſaid it*; Thus ſaith the Lord, the holy One of Iſrael and his Maker, ASKE of me, of things to come, concerning my ſonnes, and concerning the worke of my hands, COMMAND yee ME, *Iſa.* 45. 11. *which ſo tranſcendent priviledge of power, is likewiſe by the expreſſe words of this great Charter, univerſally extended unto all tranſactions of this lower part of his dominions; whether Eccleſiaſticall, which doe*

doe concerne his ſonnes, *that is, his Church: or what ever other, the more ordinary* works of his hands, *that appertaine to common providence.*

And for as much as theſe grand affaires of this his Kingdome, *as future, and* to come, *are commended to their prayers, as their moſt proper ſubject, about which they are to treate,* Aske of mee of things to come: *in this reſpect, they doe become as truely,* Prophets *alſo: though not in ſo full and compleate, yet in ſome kinde of true reſemblance; not by* foretelling, *yet by* foreſpeaking *in their prayers, things that come to paſſe. To demonſtrate which, God,* Mat.6.10.

who made and upholds this world, and all things in it, by the word of his power, doth likewise rule and governe it, by the Presidents, and prescript rules, of the word of his will: exactly
Psal.25.10 *dispensing unto men, both rewards and punishments, according to the tenour of some or other of his promises and threatnings, and former like proceedings therein recorded: though with such various liberty, in respect of the particulars, that* his wayes *remaine* unsearchable and past finding out: *That looke how hee appointed in the heavens, those ordinances of the Sunne, Moone, and Starres, by their light, heate, and motion,* to rule the

the day and night, *to* divide, *and cauſe the ſeverall* ſeaſons *of the yeare, and all the changes and alterations that doe paſſe over this* animall, *and* naturall *world. In like manner hath bee ſtretched out that ſo* exceeding broad expanſe *of his word and law,* (*to which the Pſalmiſt doth aſſimilate it*) *over this* rationall *world, of Angels and Men; and therein ſet his* Statutes, *and his* Judgements, *that by the light of Precepts, and their influences in rewards and puniſhments, they might order and direct theſe his creatures reaſonable, and all their actions: alſo diſpoſe, and ſet out all the iſſues of them. And ſeeing his* Saints

Pſal. 119. 96.

Pſal. 19. 1, 2, 3, 4. compared with Rom. 10. 18.

they

they are a people in whoſe hearts is his Law; *and their* delight *is to* meditate therein, both day and night; *they daily calculating and* obſerving *the various aſpects, conjunctions, and mixt influences of thoſe innumerable precepts, promiſes, and threatnings, which themſelves and others, Nations or Men, ſtand under: and by a* Judgement *thence reſulting, ſo farre as they have attained, endeavouring to frame their ſupplications and petitions* according to Gods will: *Hence their prayers oft, full happily ſucceed, and aforehand doe accord, to thoſe iſſues and events, that afterwards fall out. That like as it ſometimes*

Icr.8.7.

times falls out, that the earth comes to bee just under the Sunne and Moone, in some of their conjunctions; so their desires and prayers, sometimes in a direct line fall under, and subordinately concurre with Gods secret purposes, and some revealed promise met in conjunction, to produce such and such effects. The Spirit *also, herein* helping their infirmities, *sometimes so guiding and directing them, by a gracious preinstinct, though unbeknowne to them, to pitch their requests upon such particulars, as God hath fully purposed to bring to passe; becomming thereby, as it were, the Spirit of prophecy unto them; respectively, in some*

ſome meaſure and degree.

Thus doth that great King imploy his neareſt ſervants, as his under-Officers, and Sheriffes to ſerve his Writs, and executions upon his enemies; to execute the Judgement written *in his threatnings*, Pſam. 149. 9. *and to accompliſh his mercies written alſo*; *by putting all the promiſes in ſuit*; *to be as man-midwives* (*as* Hezekiahs *alluſion*, *when hee ſent a viſiting to the Prophet* Eſay, *for his voice and ſuffrage, ſeemeth to import*) *to helpe and aſſiſt his promiſes and* decrees *in their travell with mercies and deliverance, when theſe* their children doe come unto the birth, and there is no ſtrength

Eſay 37. 2, 3, 4.

Zeph. 2. 2.

ſtrength to bring them forth.

In all which, they ſhall therefore have the honour to bee accounted Co-workers together with God, in his greateſt workes of wonder. And at the latter day, when that great and laſt Edition, both of all Gods workes, and likewiſe ours, then compleate and finiſhed, ſhall bee publiſhed to all the world, they ſhall finde their names put to them, together with his owne; and the ſame by him acknowledged, to be as truely the works of their hearts and prayers, as that they are the ſole worke of his hands and power. Such honour have all his Saints.

And if all the works of God

GOD *are ſo* exceeding great, and his thoughts *therein ſo* very deepe, *Pſal.* 92. 5. *that every Iota of them, doth deſerve our deepeſt ſtudies, and intentions; and thereunto require a proper skill and* wiſedome, *to reade his hand, peculiar unto the Saints, ver.* 6. *whereunto there muſt be adjoyned the*
Pſal. 77. 6. *moſt* diligent ſearch, *and attentive obſervation to finde out his meaning in them; and withall a ſpeciall inclination, and* delight *to be converſant therein,* Thy workes are very great, ſought out of thoſe that have pleaſure in them, *Pſal.* 111. 2. *And if, of all the reſt, thoſe choiſer pieces, his workes of mercy may chal-*

challenge our beſt regard: in which his heart and delights are moſt; *on which his Wiſedome hath laid on the richeſt workmanſhip, in the moſt curious contrivements of his love: Then ſurely that ſelected volume of more ſpeciall mercies* [His Epiſtles:] *vouchſafed in anſwer to our prayers, is above all other, moſt exactly to be ſtudied, and moſt diligently to bee peruſed by us. Wherein* God *doth unboſome himſelfe, and lay open his heart, more ſweetly, more familiarly unto us; which are directed, and in a maner dedicated more particularly unto our ſelves alone; Many of them written with his owne hand, in a more immediate* Mic. 7. 18.

diate manner diſcovered and appearing in them: and all of them come ſealed with the impreſſe of everlaſting love, and downe laden with the encloſure of the moſt precious tokens of his ſpeciall favour. Who ſo is wiſe, will obſerve theſe things; and they ſhall underſtand the loving kindneſſe of the Lord. Pſ. 107. 43.

Neither have ſuch favours, onely more of mercy in the things themſelves beſtowed, but are further indeared to us, by being made our owne mercies, *by a more peculiar title to them: by which the kindneſſe in them is rendred double. For therein wee have that royall liberty to become our owne choosers,*

chooſers, and contrivers of our owne condition; having all the promiſes throwne downe to us, with blanks for us to write our names in which of them wee pleaſe; which is the greateſt liberty. And Wee have withall his Spirit *ſecretly directing, and fixing the needle of our deſires, to the ſame point, wherein his great intentions towards us doe meete with our beſt good: which is indeed the trueſt liberty. And to bee made our ſelves, whom wee love ſo well, and therefore delight to doe good unto, the chiefeſt inſtruments under him of our owne greateſt happineſſe, is a priviledge, then which, the creature is not made capable of a more tranſcen-*

tranſcendent royaltie. And yet when the greateſt love, thus rectified, which poſsibly we can beare our ſelves, hath opened its mouth wideſt, *and ſtretched our deſires in praying, to their utmoſt compaſſe; then will* Gods *infinite vaſt love, not onely* fill *them, but* doe for us above all that we are able to aske, *yea* to thinke; exceeding abundantly above all; *as* farr *above, as* his thoughts are above our thoughts; *which is* farre *more* than the heavens are higher then the earth.

All which, when put together, (if well conſidered,) how would it provoke us to call in all that precious ſtocke of our time, thoughts, and intentions

intentions which wee caſt away on trifles, to lay out the choiſeſt portion of them in this thriving trade of entercourſe with God; the returnes *whereof,* are better then the merchandiſe of ſilver, and the gaine thereof, then fine gold. *It is the praying Chriſtian that alone imployes the riches of the promiſes, which wee uſually let lie by us like dead ſtocke unimproved: whileſt hee, like a* Wiſe *and diligent* Merchant, *lookes abroad upon all the affaires of Ieſus Chriſt, that are afloat here in this world, and adventures in them all; is watchfull to ſpie out all advantages, and with an holie* πραγμοσύνη, intermedleth in every

every businesse *that may bring in glory unto God, good unto the Church, grace and comfort to his owne soule.* *And how infinitely rich must that man needs become, that puts even Gods riches out to use, with the* increase *of* ten Talents for one, *yea* an hundred fold!

The due estimate whereof, would no lesse quicken us to as diligent an inquiry, what becomes of all those goodly adventures, the prayers wee make; to listen what haven they arrive at, how, and when, and with what fraught they do returne.

In which great duty, and most necessary property of all true Merchants, yet many of the best and greatest dea-

lers,

lers, that are diligent enough in praying, are ſtill found failing and deficient; that omit no gainfull opportunity of adventure, but are careleſſe and unobſervant of their returnes.

Some *through ignorance (it may be) that this is at all a duty, or of any ſuch importance, are carefull onely how to laid in praiers enough not expecting to finde any* of this bread caſt upon the waters, *untill that great and generall* returne *of themſelves, and all the world,* with joy bringing their ſheaves with them. Others, *though at preſent, many of their prayers come home* after a few dayes, *and richly laden; yet through want*

want of skill to reade those Bills of Exchange which God often writes in an obscurer Character, they lie unregarded by them. Many when voyages prove long, (though to their greater advantage, when once they doe returne, yet in the meane time) through discouragement, they give all for lost, as we doe ships at Sea we cannot heare of. The most are commonly complayning, that their adventures still miscary, and that little or nothing comes of all their prayers. And All are negligent of keeping their bookes of accounts, to cast up their commings in, and goings out, the one with the other. By which they lose the chiefest portion of

of that comfort, which for the preſent, God *hath here allotted us to live upon* [*the revenues of their prayers.*] *And* God *alſo, is not onely* robbed *of that Cuſtome of his glory which ſhould thence accrew; but* wronged *alſo by ſtanding ſtill as* debtor *in their accounts to many prayers, in the* return *of which he hath been* creditor *long agoe.*

I have endeavoured therefore in this ſmall Treatiſe to convince beleevers of the grand importance of this duty, which is ſo full of gaine: To diſcover likewiſe the cauſes of the neglect herein, and remove the temptations and diſcouragements which doe occaſion it; and have

briefly resolved such cases as doe more usually occurre in the practise of it. But principally, my desire was to give in some few experiments, and observations, which may helpe to teach the weaker sort, though not perfectly to reade, yet here and there to spell, (and especially out of the impressions in their own hearts) Gods meaning towards them in his answers. I have cast in some scattered calculations of broken prayers cast up, which though they will not amount to make generall and perfect Tables out of, yet may serve, as Instances and examples, for young beginners, to direct them in the exercise of this most usefull skill, and

and wisdome, how to compute and ballance their accounts by comparing their prayers *and their* returnes *together.*

This small and imperfect embryon, I have presumed to send forth into the world; and directed it first of all to present its service unto you; *and make an honourable and thankfull mention of* your *Name.* Your *worth deserves a more costly, large, and lasting monument for this inscription.* Your *owne abilities of learning, eloquence, and depth of wisdome in humane affaires, would* you *be perswaded to lay them out, as* you *are able, would erect such a remembrance and sumptuous memoriall of*

you, *when* you *are gathered to* your *Fathers, as would beare ſome proportion to your great worth. But that which emboldned mee was the neere affinity which meditations of this nature doe hold, with thoſe other* your *more retired thoughts* you *thinke to none but* God *and your owne ſoule.* You *have beene long a frequent and conſtant dealer in this bleſſed way of entercourſe with* God *in private: Thoſe that know* you, *know* your *ſtrict obſervance of thoſe exchange houres* you *have devoted to meet with* God, *and enjoy communion with* Him. *But above all, it was that perſonall obligation, under which a great and ſpeci-*

all

all favour from you *long since brought me, upon which I devoted (with my selfe) the first of my labours unto* your *service. And it became one great reliefe unto my thoughts, weighing the many inconveniences of appearing thus in publique, that it gave so full occasion to pay my vowes thus openly before all the world; which having now done, God* that is rich in mercy to all that call upon him, *fill* you *with all Grace, and grant all your petitions; so prayes*

Your Worships
obliged to love
and serve *you*

THO: GOODVVIN.

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Goodwin T

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FINIS. THE

THE RETVRNE OF PRAYERS.

PSAL. 85.8.

I will heare what God the Lord will speake: for He will speake peace unto His people, and to his Saints: but let them not turne againe to folly.

The Coherence of the words.

THis *Psalme* was penned, in the name and for the comfort of the whole

Church of the *Iewes*, both as a Prophecie of, and a Prayer for their returne out of the *Babyloniſh* Captivity, and the flowing in againe of that ancient glory, peace, adminiſtration of Juſtice, liberty of Gods Ordinances, plenty and increaſe, which formerly they enjoyed, but had now ſuffered an ebbe of ſeventy yeares continuance. And firſt hee beginneth with Prayer, from the firſt *verſe* to this wee have in hand, putting the Lord in minde of, and urging Him with His gracious dealings in former times unto His Church: this is not the firſt time (ſaith he) that the Church hath

hath beene in Captivity, and that thou haſt returned it, (as out of *Egypt*, &c.) and therefore wee hope that thou wilt doe ſo againe; *Thou haſt beene favourable unto thy Land*, &c. His Prayer being finiſhed and hee having ſpoke, hee now ſtands, and liſtens, as you uſe to doe when you expect an Eccho, what Eccho hee ſhould have, what anſwere would bee returned from Heaven, whither his prayer had already come, *I will heare what the Lord will ſpeake*: or as ſome reade it, *I heare what the Lord doth ſpeake*: for ſometimes there is a preſent Eccho, a ſpeedy anſwer returned to a

mans heart, even ere the Prayer is halfe finiſhed, as unto *Daniel*, *Dan.*9.20,21. And in briefe it is this, *The Lord will ſpeake peace unto His people:* this anſwer hee findes written at the bottome of the petition, but with this clauſe of admonition for time to come, added, *But let them not returne againe to folly:* a good uſe to be made of ſo gracious an anſwer.

CHAP.

CHAP. I.

The maine observation and subject of this Discourse thence deduced: That Gods people are diligently to observe the answers to their Prayers: *The reasons of it.*

THese words being especially spoken in relation to the answer of God returned to his prayer made, therefore in that relation I meane principally to handle them.

The observation is this; *That when a man hath put up Prayers to God,* hee is to rest *assured, that God will in mercy answer his Prayers,*

Chap. 1. and *to liſten diligently, and obſerve how his Prayers are anſwered:* both are here to bee obſerved. *I will heare what God will ſpeake,* that is, how Hee will accompliſh them: and withall hee confidently expreſſeth an aſſurance, that *God will ſpeake peace.* Thus doth the Church, *Mich.*7. 7,8. *I will looke to the Lord, I will wait, my God will heare mee:* Shee was both ſure of gracious audience with Him, *my God will heare me:* and ſhe will *wait* till hee anſwers her, and obſerve how hee doth it, *I will looke to the Lord:* and verſe 9. *I will beare the indignation of the Lord, till he plead my cauſe.* So *Habakkuk,*

kuk, hee having made a Prayer againſt the Tyranny of *Nebuchadnezzar*, in the firſt Chapter, having ended it, hee begins the ſecond Chapter thus, *I will ſtand upon my watch-tower, and ſee what hee will anſwer mee*: and in the end an anſwer comes *verſe* 2. and as hee thus waited for a Viſion (for ſometime their Prophecies were in anſwer to their prayers) ſo ſhould wee for an anſwer unto ours.

The ſinfulneſſe of the neglect hereof demonſtrated by 7. reaſons.

1. Reaſon, becauſe otherwiſe you take an Ordinance of God in vaine in your hearts, which is to take *Gods Name* (with whom in that Ordinance you deale) *in vaine*: for it

Reaſ. 1. Hereby an Ordinance of God is taken in vaine: which is Gods Name.

Chap. 1. is a ſigne you thinke your prayer not an effectuall meanes to attaine that end it is ordained for; and ſay ſecretly in your hearts, as they *Iob* 21.15. *What profit have we, if wee pray to him?* for if wee uſe any meanes, and expect not the end, it is a ſigne wee thinke the meanes vaine to accompliſh that end. Whereas every faithfull prayer is ordained of God to bee a meanes to obtaine what wee deſire and pray for, and is not put up in vaine, but ſhall have anſwer: 1 *Ioh.* 5.14,15. *This is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we aske any thing according to His will, Hee heareth us*: tis true, God heareth

reth an enemy, but to *heare with favour*, is the *hearing* there meant; and is ſo uſed in our ordinary ſpeech, as wee ſay of a Favourite, that hee hath the Kings eare; and if a man bee *obſtinate* to a mans *counſell*, wee ſay, *hee would not heare*, though hee give the hearing; ſo here, *to heare* is a word of gracious inclination to doe the thing required; and thus *Gods eares* are ſaid to bee *open to their prayers*; and ſo it followes there, that *if he heareth us, whatſoever we aske, wee know that we have the petitions that we deſired of Him.* Aſſoone as wee have prayed, wee are ſaid *to have our petitions*, that is,

Chap. 1. they are then granted, and we may be confident they are assented unto by *God*; although in regard of outward dispensation, the command for accomplishment is not yet come forth: even as a petitioner is said to *have his suite*, when the *word of the King is gone forth* that it shall be done, though it passeth not the seale, or bee not signed a good while after. And like as when a wicked man sinneth, assoone as the act is committed, so soone *doth sentence* from God goe forth against the sinner, but the *Execution* overtakes him not (it may bee) a good while after, according to that of *Solo-*

mon;

mon, Sentence against an evill doer is not presently executed, it is *presently sentenced,* as the words imply, but not *executed:* so in like manner falleth it out, when a godly man prayes, that as soone as the prayer arrives in Heaven (which is in an instant) so soone is the petition granted, (So *Dan.9.at the beginning* of his prayer the *Command came forth vers.23.* though the *Angel,* who brought the answer, arrived not at him till towards the end in the Evening, *verse* 21.) but the reall accomplishment of it may bee deferred. So as no prayer in respect of an answer to it is in vaine; but where God

Chap.1. Eccles.7. 11.

Goodwin. T.

Chap. 1. God hath given a heart to ſpeake, Hee hath an eare to heare, and love to returne anſwer: which not to regard, is to take an Ordinance in vaine, which is *Gods* Name.

Reaſ. 2. Wee take the Attributes of God in vaine.

And ſecondly, not ſimply *Gods Name*, as in an Ordinance made knowne, but alſo His Name, that is, His Attributes are taken in vaine. For it is a ſigne you thinke of that God you pray to, that either *his eare is heavy, that hee cannot heare: or his hand ſhortned, that he cannot ſave: or his heart ſtraitned, and his bowells reſtrained, that he will not:* And thus you rob him, and deſpoile him of one of his moſt Royall Titles,

Titles, whereby hee ſtiles himſelfe, a *God that heareth prayers*; who is ſo regardfull of them, that in the firſt of *Kings* 8. 59. they are ſaid to be *nigh the Lord day and night*, they are all before him, and he ſets them in his view, as wee doe letters of friends which wee ſticke in our windows, that we may remember to anſwer them; or lay them not out of our boſomes, that wee might be ſure not to forget them: ſo the petitions of his people, paſſe not out of his ſight, till hee ſends an *anſwer*, which is called *ſpeaking* here; God *ſpeaking* as well in his *workes* as in his *word*. But you, by your neglect

Chap. 1. Pſal. 65. 2.

Goodwin, T.

Chap. 1. neglect herein, make an Idoll God of him, such as were the *vanities of the heathen*, as if hee *had eares and heard not, eyes and saw not* your need, &c. Such a *God* as *Elias* mockt, *You must speake aloud* (saith he) *hee may be in a journey*, &c. Even such a *God* doe you make the *God of heaven and earth* to bee, whilest you put no more confidence in him, or make no more reckoning of your *prayers* to him, then the *heathens* did of their *sacrifices* to their *gods*. Petitioners doe not onely put up their requests, but use to wait at great mens doores, and enquire, and listen what answer is given unto them; and

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and it is part of an *honour* to great men that wee doe ſo: and for the ſame end are wee alſo to *waite on God*, As an acknowledgement of his *greatneſſe*, and our *diſtance* from him, and *dependance* upon him; as *the eyes of the ſervants looke to the hand of their Maſters, ſo doe wee* (ſaith *David*) *on thee, till thou haſt mercy on us*. Pſal. 123. 2. And *Pſalme* 130. after he had prayed *verſe* 2. hee ſaith, hee *waited more than they that watch for the morning*, like thoſe that having ſome great buſineſſe to doe on the morrow, long for the day light, and looke often out to ſpy the day, ſo hee for a glimmering, and dawning of an anſwer.

Goodwin, T.

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anſwer. The like we have *Pſal.* 5. 3. *In the morning will I direct my prayer to thee, and looke*, that is, for an anſwer.

Reaſ. 3. If God give an anſwer, we make him ſpeake in vaine.

Againe, 3. If God doth give you an anſwer, if you minde it not, you let God ſpeake to you in vaine, when you doe not liſten to what hee anſwers: If two men walke together, and the one, when himſelfe hath ſaid, and ſpoke what hee would, liſtens not, but is regardleſſe of what the other anſwers, hee exceedingly ſlights the man: As *non reſpondere pro convitio eſt*, not to anſwer againe is contempt, ſo *non attendere*, not to attend to what one ſayes:

ſayes: Now our *ſpeaking* to God *by prayers*, and his *ſpeaking* to us by *anſwers* thereunto, and to ſtudy out his dealings with us, by comparing our prayers and his anſwers together which are as *Dialogues* betweene us and him, is one great part of our *walking with God*. It is ſaid of *Samuels* Prophecy, *that not a word of it fell to the ground*: and ſo it may bee ſaid of our prayers; and ſo it ought to bee of *Gods anſwers*, *not a word of them ſhould fall to the ground*: as there doth, if you by your obſervation, and liſtning thereunto catch them not (as *Benhadads* ſervants are ſaid to doe *Ahabs* words) appre-

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1 Sam. 3. 19.

Chap. 1. apprehend, and obſerve them not: and by the ſame reaſon that you are to obſerve the fulfilling of Gods promiſes, you are of your prayers alſo: now, 1 *Kings* 8.56. it is ſaid, *not one word failed of all he promiſed. Solomon* had obſerved this by a particular ſurvay, and regiſter made of all that *God* had ſpoken and done for them, and found not a promiſe unperformed: and there is the like reaſon both of anſwers to prayers, (for *prayers are but putting promiſes into ſuite*;) and for our obſerving of them: and therefore *Solomon* brings thoſe words in there, to this very purpoſe, to confirme

firme their faith in this, that no prayers made, would faile, being grounded on a promiſe, thereby to encourage others, and his owne heart to diligence herein, as alſo as a motive unto God to heare him; for *verſ.* 59. hee inferres upon it, *Let my words bee nigh thee*, &c. Seeing thou alwayes thus performeſt thy good word unto thy people. Chap. 1.

4. Yea, you will provoke the *Lord* not to anſwer at all, he will forbeare to anſwere, becauſe hee ſees it will be thus in vaine. When a man is talking to one that liſtens not to him, hee will ceaſe to anſwer, and leave off ſpeaking, *Reaſ.* 4. God may bee provoked, not to anſwer at all.

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Heb. 10. 36

ing, and so will God. So as that which the *Apostle* saith of *faith*, that it is *not enough to beleeve, but when you have done the will of God, you have need of patience* to eke out faith, that *you may inherite the promises*, may bee also said, and is alike true of praying: it is not enough to pray, but after you have prayed, you have need to listen for an answer, that you may receive your prayers; God will not fulfill them else. As hee said, *the Sermon was not done*, when yet the Preacher had done, because it is not done, till practised: so our prayers are not done, when yet made, but you must

must further waite for, and attend the accompliſhment. Chap. 1.

5. If you obſerve not his anſwers, how ſhall you bleſſe God, and returne thankes to him for hearing your prayers: *Pſalm.* 116. 1, 2. *I love the Lord, becauſe hee hath heard my voice, and my ſupplication,* and therefore hee goes on to thanke him, throughout the whole *Pſalme*. You *are to watch unto prayer, with thankſgiving:* and therefore, as to watch, to obſerve, and recollect your owne wants, which you are to pray for, that you may have matter of requeſts to put up, ſo alſo to obſerve Gods anſwers for

Reaſ. 5. We ſhall not return thankes to God for hearing us.

Col. 4. 2.

Chap. 1. for matter of thankesgiving; and many fill that common-place-head full of matter, to furniſh them for petitioning, but as for this other of thankesgiving, they watch not unto it againſt they come to pray, nor ſtudy matter for that head alſo; and if any ſtudy will furniſh you this way, it is the ſtudying out of Gods anſwers to your prayers: The reaſon you pray ſo much, and give thankes ſo little, is, that you minde not Gods anſwers: you doe not ſtudy them. When we have put up a faithfull prayer, God is made our debtor by promiſe, and wee are to take notice of his payment,

ment, and give him an acknowledgement of the receipt of it, hee loseth of his glory else.

6. As God loseth, so your selves also the experience which you might get hereby. 1. Both experience of God and his faithfulnesse, which will cause in you, hope and confidence in God another time, when you have found him againe and againe answering your prayers. It was a speech of one eminent in holinesse, upon occasion of the accomplishment of a great request made to God by him, That God having never denied him any request; *I have tried* God *often*,

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Reas. 6. Wee lose much experience.

1. Of Gods faithfulnes to us.

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often, now (ſayes he) *henceforth I will truſt him,* if the hearing the prayers of another, will encourage us to goe to God, (as *Pſal.* 33. 5. *For this cauſe ſhall every one that is godly pray unto thee*) much more when we obſerve, and have experience that our owne are heard: Therefore (ſayes *David*) *Pſal.* 116. 1,2. *The Lord hath heard mee, and I will call upon him as long as I live:* as if hee had ſaid, Now that God hath heard mee, now I know what to doe: this experiment, if I had no more, is enough to encourage mee for ever to pray unto God: I have learned by it to call upon him,

as

as long as I live. And also 2. by observing Gods answers to your prayers, you will gaine much insight into your own hearts, and wayes, and prayers; and may thereby learne how to judge of them. So *Psal.*66.18,19. *Davids* assurance that he did not regard iniquity in his heart, was strengthned by Gods having heard his prayers: for thus he reasons, *If I regard iniquity in my heart,* God *will not heare me: But* God *hath heard me.* For 1. if God doth not grant your petitions, it will put you to study a reason of that his dealing: and so you will come to search into your prayers, and the ca-

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2. Of our owne hearts and wayes towards him.

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riage of your hearts therein, to see whether you *did not pray amisse*; according to that, *Ye lust & have not, because ye aske amisse*, *Iames* 4.3. As if you send to a friend, who is punctuall in that point of friendship of returning answers, and useth not to faile, and you receive no answer from him, you will beginne to thinke there is something in it: and so also here, When a Petition is denied, you will be jealous of your selves, and inquisitive, What should bee the matter, and so by that search come to see *that* in your prayers, which you will learne to mend the next time. Or 2. if they be answered

swered, yet because that therein usually God deales in a proportion with you to your prayers, (as you might perceive if you would observe his dealings with you) you would by this meanes come to have much insight into Gods acceptation, and opinion of your wayes: For you should see His dealings with you, and yours with Him, to be exceeding parallel and correspondent, and hold proportion each with other. So *Ps.* 18.6. *In my distresse I called upon the Lord*, and so *vers.* 7,8. &c. he goes on to describe his deliverance which was the fruit of those prayers, and then

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Chap. 1. at 20, 21. *verses*, &c. hee addes his obſervation upon both, *According to the cleanneſſe of my hands hath he dealt with mee, &c. For with the pure thou ſhalt ſhew thy ſelfe pure.*

Reaſ. 7. We ſhall loſe much comfort.

7. You will loſe much of your comfort: there is no greater joy then to ſee prayers anſwered, or to ſee ſoules converted by us, *Iohn* 16.24. *Aske and you ſhall receive, that your joy may be full:* the receiving anſwers makes joy to abound and overflow. Yea, even when we pray for others, if our prayers be anſwered for them, our joyes are exceeding great; much more when in our owne behalfe: and therein, even

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in the ſmalleſt things which a Chriſtian doth enjoy, doth his comfort exceed anothers, that hee hath them by vertue of prayers, and promiſes: hee knowes how hee came by them; *If ſtolne waters bee ſweet, And bread eaten in ſecret*, &c. (as *Solomon* ſaies) to wicked men; *beg'd meat is much more ſweet* to godly men: yea, in the very praying for outward mercies, there is more ſweetneſſe, then they have in enjoying them. As it is joy to a good heart to ſee any one converted, but much more to him that is the meanes of it. *I have no greater joy* (ſaies S. *Iohn*) *then that my children walke*

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Pro. 9. 17.

Chap. 1. *in truth:* So to ſee God doe good to his Church, and heare others prayers, is a comfort, but much more to ſee him doe it at a mans own prayers. Therefore when God reſtores comfort to a drooping ſoule, hee is ſaid, *Eſay* 57. *To reſtore comfort alſo to his mourners*, that is, to thoſe that prayed and mourned for him, as well as unto that ſoule it ſelfe, it being a comfort to them to ſee their prayers anſwered. Comfort it is many

1. wayes: ¹ To heare from God; as to heare from a friend, though it bee but two or three words, and that about a ſmall matter, if there be at the bottome

this

this ſubſcription, *Your loving father*, or, *Your aſſured friend*, it ſatisfies abundantly: ſo alſo, [2] To know that God is mindfull of us, accepts our works, fulfils his promiſes: [3] How doth it rejoice one to find another of his mind in a controverſie: but that God and wee ſhould be of *one minde*, and concur in the deſire of the ſame things; *not two in the earth onely agree*, but God who is in heaven and we to agree, this rejoyceth the heart exceedingly. And thus it is when a man perceives his praier anſwered. Therefore you loſe much of your comfort in bleſſings, when you do not obſerve anſwers to your praiers.

Chap. 1.

2.

3.

Mat. 18. 19

Chap. 2.

Chap. II.

Three cases propounded: The first, concerning prayers for the Church, and for the accompliſhment of ſuch promiſes as may fall out in ages to come.

NOw as for rules, and helps to find out *Gods* meaning towards you in your prayers, and to ſpie out anſwers; and how to know when God doth any thing in anſwer to your prayers, this is the next thing to bee handled: wherein firſt, I will anſwer ſome caſes, and queries which may fall out in ſeverall ſorts of prayers, about

about the answering of them:

Chap. 2.

1. As first, concerning prayers put up for the Church, for the accomplishment of such things as fall out in all ages to come.

2. Concerning prayers made for others of your friends, kinred, &c.

3. Concerning those prayers, whether for your selves or others, wherein others joyne with you.

§. 1. The full answer to such prayers is to come.

For the first. First, there may bee some prayers, which you must bee content, never your selves to see answered in this world, the accomplishment of them not falling out in your time: such as

Chap. 2. are thoſe you haply make for the calling of the *Iews*, the utter downfall of Gods enemies, the flouriſhing of the Goſpell, the full purity and liberty of Gods Ordinances, the particular flouriſhing and good of the ſociety and place you live in: all you whoſe hearts are right, doe treaſure up many ſuch prayers as theſe, and *ſow* much of ſuch precious *ſeed*, which you muſt bee content to have the Church (it may be) in after Ages to reape: All which prayers are not yet loſt, but will have anſwers: for as God is an *eternall God*, and *Chriſts righteouſneſſe an everlaſting righteouſneſſe*, and therefore of

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eternall efficacy, *Dan.*9.24. *Being offered up by the eternal Spirit, Heb.*9.14. So are prayers alſo, which are the worke of the eternall Spirit of Chriſt, made to that God in his Name, and in him are eternally accepted, and of eternall force, and therefore may take place in after Ages. So the praier that S. *Stephen* made for his perſecutors, tooke place in *Saul* when S. *Stephen* was dead. So *Davids* prayer againſt *Iudas*, *Pſal.* 109.8,9. took effect above a thouſand yeares after, as appeares, *Acts* 1.20. So the prayers of the Church for three hundred yeares in the Primitive times, that *Kings* might *come to the*

Chap. 2. *the knowledge of the truth*, and *they leade peaceable and quiet lives in all godlineſſe and honeſty*, (which S. *Paul* in *Nero's* time exhorted unto, 1 *Tim.* 2. 2.) were not anſwered, and accompliſhed till *Conſtantines* time, when the Church brought forth a Man childe. So *Eſay* 58. after hee had exhorted to, and given directions for faſting and prayer in a right manner, hee adjoyneth this promiſe: Thou ſhalt *raiſe up the foundation of many generations*; *thou ſhalt be called the repairer of the breach*, namely for this, becauſe his faſting, and prayers might have influence into many ages yet to come, in the accom-

Rev. 12. 1.

accompliſhment of what was prayed for. And that which *Chriſt* ſaies of the Apoſtles, reaping the fruit of S. *Iohn* the Baptiſts miniſtery, and the ſeed hee had ſowne, is in like maner herein verified; *Iohn* 4. 37. *One ſoweth and another reapeth*. And in this ſenſe that which the Papiſts ſay is true, that there is a common treaſury of the *Church*, not of their *merits*, but of their *prayers*: there are *bottles of teares* a filling, *Vialls* a filling to be powred out for the deſtruction of *Gods* enemies: what a collection of prayers hath there beene theſe many Ages towards it? and that may bee one reaſon

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ſon why God will do ſuch great things towards the end of the world, even becauſe there hath beene ſo great a ſtock of prayers going, for ſo many ages, which is now to be returned: and herein it falls out to us in our *prayers*, as in their *prophecies* to the *Prophets* of old, *The Spirit in them did ſignifie the ſufferings of* Chriſt, *and the glory that ſhould follow. Vnto whom it was revealed, that not unto themſelves, but unto us they did miniſter the things that are now revealed:* and thus is it in the *ſpirit of prayer*, which is in ſtead of the *ſpirit of prophecy:* for wee pray through the guidance of the *Spirit*

1 Pet. 1. 11.

(*who*

(*who teacheth us what to aske*) for many things that come to passe in after Ages.

Chap. 2.

Onely at present, it may bee, in prayer thou hast revealed unto thee by a secret impression made on thy spirit, that these things shall come to passe, and so hast thy faith confirmed in them, and withall an evidence, that even for thy prayers, among others, God will performe them; and that the contribution of thy prayers, doth helpe to make up the summe: and upon such prayers God usually for the present also testifies the acceptation of a mans person, and reveales himselfe

§. 2. Yet they may have an answer at present, in assurãce both that they shall come to passe, and of the acceptation of our persons for them.

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selfe most to him that hee is his; as he did to *Moses*; he never revealed his love to *Moses* more, then when hee prayed most for Gods people. And haply thou hast that as one of thy best evidences of the uprightnesse of thy heart, that thou canst pray for the Churches good, though for a long time to come, which thou mayest never behold with thine eyes, even as *David* also did, and rejoyced in it.

§. 3. And in heaven we shall rejoyce at the accomplishment of them: and at the day of judgement

And when they are accomplished, and thou in heaven, thy joy will surely bee the more full for these thy prayers: as at the conversion of those thou hast prayed for, so at the

the ruine of the Churches enemies, &c. whom thou didst pray against; For if there bee *joy in heaven at the conversion of a sinner*, (as at the birth of a new Prince and Heire of heaven) then haply in a proportion hee shall rejoyce most, whose prayers had most hand in it, and a speciall interest therein. And so as thy other *workes*, so thy prayers *follow thee*, and *the fruit of them*, as *Ieremy* speakes: and how ever, yet at the day of Judgement thou shalt rejoice, as well as they that enjoyed the fruit of thy prayers in their times, thou having sowne the seed of their happinesse; *both hee that sowes*,

Ier. 17. 10.

Chap. 3. *sowes, and hee that reapes shall then rejoyce together,* as Christ saies, *Ioh.* 4. 36.

CHAP. III.

The second Case, concerning prayers made for others: of our friends, &c. How they are answered.

THe second case is, concerning answers to our prayers for others, for particular men, as friends, and kinred, &c. and likewise for temporall blessings.

Pray for others we ought.

Pray for others you know wee must: so the Elders of the Church for those

thoſe that are ſicke, *Iam.* 5. 15, 16. *Pray one for another* ſayes S. *Iames:* as in caſe a man is troubled with a luſt, tell ſome private friend of it, *Confeſſe your ſins one to another*; that when a mans owne prayers are not ſtrong enough to caſt it out, it may bee done by the helpe of anothers prayers joyned with his. (So it followes, *That yee may bee healed, verſ.* 16. For in that ſenſe I underſtand healing, in *verſ.* 16.) So alſo, 1 *Iohn* 5. 16. *If a man ſee his brother ſin a ſin, which is not unto death*, that is, not againſt the *Holy Ghoſt*, *hee ſhall aske life for him, and* God *ſhall give him life, that ſins not unto death.* Con- Chap. 3.

Chap. 3.

§. 1. Such prayers for others God often granteth.

Concerning this case I give these considerations, how such prayers are answered.

1. Consideration. Such prayers God often heareth; why else are any such promises made? as *That they shall bee healed in their bodies*, James 5. 15. *Healed of their lusts, ver.* 16. *Converted to life*, 1 Joh. 5. 16. God hath made these to encourage us to pray, and to testifie his abundant love to us; that it so overflowes and runs over, that hee will heare us, not onely for our selves, but for others also: which is a signe we are in extraordinary favour. So God intimates concerning *Abraham*,

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ham, to *Abimelech*, *Gen.* 20.7. *He is a Prophet, and he ſhall pray for thee*, and *thou ſhalt live*: and as *hee* was a *Prophet*, ſo *wee are Prieſts*; as for our ſelves, ſo for others alſo, to *God our Father*: and it is a prerogative wee have through the fellowſhip wee have, and communion of *Chriſts Prieſtly Office, who hath made us Kings and Prieſts*, Rev. 1. 6. to prevaile and intercede for others; and a ſpeciall token and pledge of extraordinary love. For if God heares a mans prayers for others, much more for himſelfe in his owne behalfe. So when Chriſt healed the man ſicke of the palſie, it was, as it is ſaid,

For

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For the faith of the ſtanders by, Matth. 9.2. *Hee ſeeing their faith, ſaid, Thy ſinnes are forgiven thee*; the meaning is, not as if for their faith ſake hee forgave that man his ſins, for, *The juſt doth live by his* (owne) *faith*: but to encourage them, who out of faith brought that ſicke man to him; and us all in like maner to bring others, and their plaints, by prayer, before him; he therefore then tooke occaſion to declare and pronounce forgiveneſſe to that poore man; hee therefore then ſaid, *Thy ſinnes are forgiven thee.*

Hab. 2.4.

§. 2. Yet alwaies they do not prevaile for the parties prayed for.

2. Conſideration: yet ſecondly, prayers for others

thers may often alſo not obtaine the particular thing prayed for them. So *Samuels* prayer for *Saul*, 1 *Sam.*15.35. So *David* for his enemies, *Pſal.* 37.13. Chap. 3.

For it is in this, as it is in the uſe of other meanes and ordinances for the good of others; God making ſuch like kinde of promiſes to our prayers herein, as hee hath made to our endeavours to convert when wee preach to men: that looke as wee preach to many, and yet but few beleeve, for, *Who hath beleeved our report?* even as many as are *ordained to eternall life*; wee *become all to all, and winne but ſome:* The reaſon. Rom.10. 16.

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some: So we pray for many, not knowing who are ordained to eternall life, which whileſt wee know not, wee are yet to pray for them, 1 *Tim.* 2. 3, 4. Onely as where God hath ſet his Ordinance of Preaching, it is more than a probable ſigne hee hath ſome to convert, and uſually the word takes among ſome, though often but a few: So when hee hath ſtirred up our hearts to pray for others, it is a ſigne God will heare us for ſome of thoſe wee pray for: yet ſo as we may bee denied. For God doth require it as a duty on our parts, becauſe it is an outward meanes ordained by God,

God, by which ſometimes He uſeth to bring things to paſſe: but yet not as ſuch a certaine, and infallible meanes, as hee hath tied himſelfe univerſally unto, to bring the thing to paſſe on his part. Chap. 3

And though indeed his promiſe to heare and accept the prayer is generall and univerſall: yet the promiſe to heare it, by granting the very thing it ſelfe prayed for, is but an indefinite promiſe; ſuch as he makes to other meanes of doing men good, as to our admonitions and reproofes, and to our preaching, &c. *Hee makes ſuch promiſes, becauſe ſometimes he doth heare*, and convert

Such promiſes to hear us for others, being but indefinite, not univerſall.

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Chap. 3. by them. For inſtance, that *promiſe, Iam.* 5. 15. *of healing the ſick*, cannot be univerſall: for it might then be ſuppoſed as a truth implyed in it, that ſick men might never die, when as it Heb. 9. 27. is *appointed for all men once to die*, ſeeing it may bee ſuppoſed that the Elders may at all ſuch times of danger of death ſtill come and pray with them: but the meaning is, that it is an Ordinance, which God hath made a gracious promiſe unto, becauſe *he often* doth reſtore the ſick at their prayers: and therefore upon every ſuch particular occaſion, wee are to relie upon God for the performance of it, by

an act of recumbencie; though with an act of full assurance that we shall obtain it, we cannot; the promise not being universall, but indefinite. Chap. 3.

Of the like nature are all other promises of things temporall and outward, (of which wee herein speak) as when God promiseth to *give long life* to them that *honour their parents*; *riches and honours to them that feare Him*; the tenour and purport of which promises is not, as if absolutely, infallibly, and universally God doth alwayes performe these to those that are yet truely qualified with the conditions specified in those pro-

Illustrated by the like tenour of all promises of things temporall.

Chap. 3. promiſes; The contrary both Scripture, inſtances, and common experience ſhewes: they are therefore indefinitely meant, and ſo to bee underſtood by us; for, becauſe when ever God doth diſpenſe any ſuch mercies to any of his, hee would doe it by promiſe; *All his waies* to His *being truth*, that is, the fulfilling of ſome truth promiſed; and alſo God having purpoſed in his outward diſpenſation of things here in this world, to beſtow riches and honours upon ſome that feare him, (though not upon all, for how then ſhould Eccleſ. 7. 2. *all things fall alike to all?* Poverty and contempt upon

on them *that feare God*, even as well as thoſe that *feare him not*.) Hee hath therefore indefinitely expreſſed His gracious diſpenſation herein: requiring anſwerably an act of faith (which principle in us is ſuited to a promiſe, as a faculty is to its proper object) ſuitable to that his meaning in the promiſe; That as hee intended not in ſuch promiſes an abſolute, infallible, univerſall obligation of himſelfe to the performance of them to all that feare him: ſo the act of faith which a man is to put forth toward this promiſe, in the application of it for his owne particular, is not required

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The faith towards them required to be but an indefinite act of recumbency, not of aſſurance.

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quired to be an abſolute, infallible perſwaſion, and aſſurance that God will beſtow theſe outward things upon him, having theſe qualifications in him; but onely an *indefinite act* (as I may ſo call it) *of recumbency, and ſubmiſſion*; caſting and adventuring our ſelves upon him for the performance of it to us, not knowing but he may in his outward diſpenſations make it good to us, yet with ſubmiſſion to His good pleaſure, if otherwiſe Hee diſpoſeth it.

Though of aſſurance to the promiſe in generall, yet not in the application of it.

It is true indeed, that that act of *generall aſſent*, which faith is to give to this promiſe in the gene-

ral

rall abſtract truth of it, is to bee an aſſured certaine perſwaſion and beleefe, that God hath made this promiſe, and that Hee certainely will, and doth performe it unto ſome according to his purpoſe expreſſed therein; which act of generall aſſent, is that *beleeving without wavering*, namely of the truth of the promiſe in generall, which S. *Iames* calls for in *prayer*, *Iames* 1.6. But yet that ſpeciall act of *application* (as Divines call it) required in this faith, whereby I am to reſt upon it, for my owne particular, is not required to be ſuch an undoubted perſwaſion, as to thinke that I ſhall cer- Chap. 3.

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Chap. 3. tainly have this particular promiſe in kinde fulfilled to mee; for the truth, purpoſe, and intent of the promiſe, is not univerſall, but indefinite. So as it is but an *it may bee* (as God elſewhere expreſſeth ſuch promiſes, as *Zeph.* 2. 1,2.) that it ſhall bee performed to mee: and yet becauſe *it may be* God will perform it unto mee, therefore my duty is to caſt my ſelfe upon God, and put in for it, with ſubmiſſion to His good pleaſure for the performance of it to mee. So that ſo farre as the truth and intent of it, is revealed to be infallible, and certaine, ſo far a man is bound to have an anſwerable act of

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of *faith*, of certaine and infallible perſwaſion towards it, as to beleeve without wavering that God hath made ſuch a promiſe, and will perform it according to His intent in making it, which is *unto ſome:* but yet withall becauſe the tenour of it is but indefinite, and in that reſpect, whether it ſhall be performed to mee or no, is not therein certainely revealed; Therefore God requires not of mee in the application of ſuch a promiſe, an abſolute full perſwaſion that hee will performe it to mee in ſuch or ſuch a manner, &c. But onely an act of dependance and adherence with refer-

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ring it to his wife and righteous good pleasure towards me.

Yet when God sometimes gives a speciall faith, then wee are to be assured the thing shall be done.

And yet againe, if God should at any time give a man such a speciall *faith* concerning any such particular temporall blessing for himselfe or another, then hee is bound to beleeve it thus in particular: as when Hee gave power to any to worke miracles, (as to his Apostles Hee did, with a Commission to work them,) then they were bound to beleeve that such and such a miracle should infallibly bee wrought by them; as that the Devils should be cast out by them, &c. And therefore in this case Christ

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Chriſt rebukes His Diſciples, for not beleeving thus upon ſuch particular occaſions, *Matth.* 17.20. And then it is alſo true, that if God give ſuch a *faith*, Hee will infallibly perform it: and thus thoſe his words are to bee underſtood, *Matth.* 27. 22. *Whatſoever ye aske in faith beleeving, ye ſhall receive*, hee ſpeaks it of the faith of *miracles*, for 21. *ver.* he had ſaid, *If ye beleeve and doubt not, yee ſhall ſay to this Mountaine, remove into the ſea, and it ſhall be removed*: ſo that when God works ſuch a faith, and wee are called to it, we are bound to beleeve with a certaine perſwaſion that ſuch a thing

An objection prevented.

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Chap. 3. thing will be done and it ſhall be done, but unto ſuch a kinde of ſpeciall faith in temporall promiſes for our ſelves or others, God doth not now alwayes call us. If indeed at any time wee did beleeve and doubted not, by reaſon of a ſpeciall faith wrought by GOD, that GOD would remove a Mountaine into the Sea, or beſtow any outward mercy, it ſhould be done: for he that ſtirred up ſuch a *faith*, would accompliſh the thing: but it is not that, which God requires of beleevers, that they ſhould without doubting thus beleeve concerning outward things; the promiſes

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miſes thereof being not univerſall, but indefinite; and therefore anſwerably a man is not abſolutely bound to beleeve that God will certainly beſtow ſuch a temporall bleſſing on him, no not though hee ſhould have the qualification, which the promiſe is made unto, the promiſe being not univerſall, made to all ſo qualified, but indefinite to ſome of ſuch ſo qualified. The caſe is the ſame of beleeving promiſes made to our praying for others, which is the thing in hand.

§. 3. Such prayers for others are often returned into our own boſome.

3. When the prayers are thus made out of conſcience of our duty for ſuch, whom yet God doth not

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not intend that mercy unto, then they are returned againe into our owne bosomes to our advantage: even as S. *Paul* saith, *that his rejoycing that others preached*, though they lost their labour, should *turne to his salvation, Phil.* 1. 20. So prayers for others, though to the parties themselves we prayed for they prove in vaine, yet they turne to our good. So *Psalm.* 35. 12, 13. *When his enemies were sick*, David *he prayed and humbled himselfe*, and *my prayers* (sayes he) *returned into my bosome. David* did by this his prayer in secret for his enemies, testifie the sincerity of his heart to God, and

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and his true forgiveneſſe of them (for it is the uſuall diſpoſition of Gods Children, to pray for them that are the greateſt enemies to them,) and this prayer though it did not profit them, yet it turned to *Davids* owne good, it came back, and home againe to him, with bleſſings to himſelfe; God delighting in, and rewarding ſuch a diſpoſition in his childe, as much as any other; becauſe therein wee reſemble *Chriſt* ſo truely, and ſhew that God is our Father, and our ſelves to have his bowels in us; and God ſtirreth up this praying diſpoſition in his children for their enemies, not

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Chap. 3. not alwayes that he means to heare them for them, but becauſe he meanes to draw forth, and ſo have an occaſion to reward thoſe holy diſpoſitions, which are the nobleſt parts of his image in them, and wherewith hee is ſo much delighted; and ſo their prayers returne into their own boſomes, and it is taken, as if they had prayed for themſelves all that while. Thus in like manner, when *Moſes* prayed ſo earneſtly for the people of *Iſrael*, God offered to returne his prayer into his owne boſome, and doe as much for him alone, as hee had deſired that God would doe for them

them. *I will make of thee a great Nation* (ſaies God to him) for whom I will doe as much for thy ſake, as thou haſt prayed I ſhould doe for theſe. As in preaching the Goſpell, *Chriſt* told the Diſciples, That if in any houſe they came to preach peace, there were not a *Sonne of peace, Luke* 10. on whom the meſſage might take place, and their peace reſt, *Your peace* (ſaies hee) *ſhall returne unto you againe.* So is it, if your prayers take not place.

Chap. 3. Exod. 32. 10.

§. 4. God often in the end caſts ſuch out of our prayers, he intends not to heare us for.

4. If wee have prayed long for thoſe, whom God intends not mercy unto, hee will in the end caſt them out of our prayers and

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and hearts, and take our hearts off from praying for them. That which he did by a revelation from heaven to ſome Prophets of old, as to *Samuel* and *Ieremiah*, the ſame hee doth by a more undiſcerned worke; that is, by withdrawing aſſiſtance to pray for ſuch; by withdrawing the ſpirit of ſupplication from a man, for ſome men, and in ſome buſineſſes. Now thus hee did with *Samuel*; *Why doſt thou mourne for Saul?* 1 Sam. 16. 1. So with *Ieremiah*, Jer. 7. 16. *Pray not for this people:* and this he doth, becauſe hee is loath when his people doe pray but to heare them; and

The reaſon.

would

would not that ſuch precious breath as that of prayer is, ſhould be without its full and direct ſucceſſe, or be in vaine: therefore when hee meanes not to heare, he layes the key of prayer out of the way, ſo deſirous is hee to give anſwers to every prayer. It falls out in this caſe of praying for another, as in reproving another. One whom God intends not good unto, God will lock up a mans heart towards ſuch a man, that he ſhall not bee able to reprove him; when towards another, God doth inlarge it as much, where hee intends good; thus it is ſometimes in praying for another;

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another: ſo as in praying a man ſhall not bee able to pray for, as not to reprove ſuch a man, though his heart was to doe both: but it fareth with him as God threatneth concerning *Ezekiel* towards that people, that hee makes his *tongue cleave to the roofe of his mouth.*

Ezek. 3. 26

§. 5. God ſometimes anſwers thoſe prayers in ſome others, who we prayed not for. The reaſon.

5. God will heare thoſe prayers for, and anſwer them in ſome others, in whom wee ſhall have as much comfort, as in thoſe wee prayed for: and ſo it often proves and falls out. God, to ſhew *hee lookes not as man lookes*, nor chooſeth as hee chooſeth, lets our hearts be ſet on work to pray for the converſi-

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on or good of one hee intends not mercy to; and then anſwers them in ſome other, whom Hee makes as deare unto us. When God had caſt off *Saul*, ſtill *Samuels* heart lingred after him, and hee mourned for him: but God at the ſame time, when hee bids him ceaſe mourning for *Saul*, 1 Sam. 16. to ſhew that yet hee accepted that his mourning as it came from him; *Goes* (ſayes he) *and anoint one of the ſonnes of Ieſſe*, 1 Sam. 16. 1. *Samuel* deſired to ſee a good ſucceſſor in that government, and hee having been their ruler, it was his ſpeciall care; and hee having anointed

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Chap. 3. ointed *Saul*, it exceedingly grieved him, that hee ſhould prove ſo wicked; and God ſaw and anſwered the ground of his deſires; and therefore immediately upon his prayers, ſent him to anoint the beſt King that ever was upon that Throne, who was the iſſue and Man-childe of thoſe his prayers. And againe, when *Samuel* came to anoint one of the ſonues of *Ieſſe*; when he ſaw *Eliab*, *verſe 6. Surely* (ſaies hee) *the Lords anointed is before me*: If *Samuel* had beene to chooſe, hee would have choſen him, and would have prayed for and deſired him: but *God ſeeth not as*

man

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man ſeeth, verſe 7. *and chooſeth not as man chooſeth*: but in *David* was his prayer fully heard, and anſwered, and that better. So *Abraham* hee had prayed for *Iſhmael*; and *Oh let Iſhmael live in thy ſight! Gen.* 17. but God gave him *Iſaac* in ſtead of him. So perhaps thou prayeſt for one childe more then for another, out of thy naturall affection, looking *on his countenance* and ſtature; as *Samuel* did on *Eliabs*: but yet thy prayers being ſincere in the ground of them, in that thou deſireſt a childe of Promiſe, God therefore anſwers thee, though in another, for whom yet haply, thy heart

Chap. 4. heart was not ſo much ſtirred; who yet when he is converted, proves to thee as great a comfort; and it is as much as if that other thou didſt moſt pray for, had been wrought upon.

CHAP. IV.

The third Caſe, about ſuch prayers wherein others joyne with us: How thereinto diſcern the influence of our owne prayers.

THe third Caſe to bee conſidered is, when a man prayes for ſomething with others; or which

which others likewiſe pray for with him, ſo as hee is not alone in it; how then ſhould hee know, that his prayers have a hand in obtaining it, as well as theirs? For in ſuch caſes *Satan* is apt to object; though the thing is granted indeed; yet not for thy prayers, but for the prayers of thoſe others joyned in it with thee.

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§. 1. If our hearts were affected in praying with the ſame holy affections wherwith others that prayed with us were.

1. If thy heart did ſympathize, and accord in the ſame holy affections with thoſe others in praying, then it is certaine thy voice hath helpt to carry it; *If two agree on earth* (ſaies *Chriſt*) *Matt.* 18. 19. the word is συμφωνήσωσιν, that is, if they harmonially a-

Chap. 4. gree to play the ſame tune: for prayers are muſick in Gods eares, and ſo called *Melody to God, Epheſ.* 5.19. It is not ſimply their agreeing in the thing prayed for, but in the affections: for it is the affections that make the conſort and the melody: now if the ſame holy affections were toucht, and ſtruck by *Gods Spirit* in thy heart, that in theirs, then thou doeſt help to make up the conſort, and without thee it would have beene imperfect: yea, without thee the thing might not have beene done; for *God* ſtands ſometimes upon ſuch a number of voices, and one voice caſts it; as when hee

named

named ten righteous persons to save *Sodome:* when therefore the same holy motive and affections acted thee in thy prayer, which did them in theirs, it was the worke of the same Spirit, both in them and thee, and God hath heard thee. Chap. 4.

Especially if God did stir up the same secret instinct in thee, to sympathize with another in praying for such a thing unbeknowne one to another, as sometimes it falls out; then surely thy prayers are in it as well as his. You shall observe sometimes a generall instinct of the Spirit, put into Gods peoples hearts, ge- Especially when this sympathie is unbeknowne each to other.

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nerally to pray for or againſt a thing, without each others ſtirring up one another: even as *Ezekiel* by the river *Chebar* prophecyed the ſame things *Ieremiah* did at home at *Ieruſalem*. Thus againſt the time that *Chriſt* the *Meßiah* came in the fleſh, there was a great expectation raiſed up in the hearts of the godly people, to look and pray for him, *Luke* 2. 27. and 38.

§. 2. By ſome ſpeciall evidence: as firſt, ſometimes by ſome notable circumſtance.

2 God doth uſually, and often evidence to a man, that his prayers contributed, and went among the reſt towards the obtaining of it; as,

1. By ſome circumſtance as

as for example, ſometimes by ordering it ſo, that that man that prayed moſt for a thing of concernement, ſhould have the firſt newes of it when it comes to bee accompliſht: which God doth, as knowing it will bee moſt welcome newes to him. God doth herein, as wee doe with a friend, who we know is cordiall in, and wiſheth well to a buſineſſe; hee ſends him the firſt word of it, who was moſt hearty in it, and prayed moſt about it. Good old *Simeon*, had ſurely beene earneſt in ſeeking the Lord, as wel as the reſt in *Ieruſalem*, to ſend the *Meſſiah* into the world,

Chap. 4. to reſtore and raiſe up the ruines of *Iſrael*, for *God* did reveale to him, that hee ſhould ſee him before hee died: and therefore to evidence to him his reſpect to his prayers, God carried the good old man into the Temple, juſt at the time when the Child was brought into the Temple, for to *be preſented to the Lord*, *Luk.* 2. 27, 28. And in like manner good *Anna*, *who had ſerved God with faſting and prayer night and day*: God ordereth it ſo, that ſhe muſt alſo come in at the ſame inſtant, *Luke* 2. 38. By ſome ſuch like peculiar circumſtance or other, doth God often uſe to witneſſe to a man heart

heart, that hee hath heard him in buſineſſes, prayed for in common with others.

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2. By filling the heart with much joy in the accompliſhment of what a man prayed for: which is an evident argument that his prayers did move the Lord to effect it, as well as the prayers of others. Thus that good old *Simeon*, ſeeing his prayers now anſwered, hee was even willing to die through joy; and thought he could not die in a better time; *Lord, now let thy ſervant depart in peace*. For when the deſires have vented and laid out much of themſelves, then when the

Secondly by the hearts being filled with much joy in the accompliſhment.

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returne comes home, they have an anſwerable part and ſhare in the comfort of it: and as deſires abounded in praying, ſo will joy and comfort alſo in the accompliſhment. As when a Ship comes home, not onely the chiefe owners, but every one that ventured ſhall have a ſhare out of the returne, in a proportion to the adventure: ſo here, though ſome one whom it mainly concerns hath eſpeciall intereſt in the mercy obtained, yet thou ſhalt have thy prayers out in joy from God, that the thing is granted. Saint *Paul* had planted a Church at *Theſſalonica*, but hee could not ſtay to water

water it with his owne preaching, yet when absent, hee waters thoſe Plants which hee had ſet, with prayers, night and day; 1 *Theſ.* 3. 10. *Night and day praying exceedingly for you*, ſayes hee: and as his prayers were exceeding abundant for them, ſo was his joy as abundant in them, when hee had heard that they ſtood ſtedfaſt, and fell not back againe; *Now wee live, if yee ſtand faſt in the Lord, verſ.* 8. *And what thanks can wee render to God for all the joy wherewith wee joy for your ſakes, before the Lord? ver.* 9.

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3. By thankfulneſſe for it when accõpliſht.

3. If God give you a heart thankfull for a bleſ-

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ſing vouchſafed to another, prayed for by you with others, it is another ſigne your prayers have ſome hand in it. S. *Paul* knew not *what thankes to give* for the anſwering of his prayers, as in that forementioned place. Old *Eli* had put up but one ſhort ejaculatory petition that wee reade of, for *Hannah*, & that was, *The Lord grant thy petition*, 1 *Sam.* 1. 17. & for the returne of that one prayer, when *Hannah* related how *God* had anſwered her, *ver.* 16, 27. he returned ſolemne thankes, *And he worſhipped the Lord there*, *ver.* 28.

§. 3. Eſpecially when the thing obtained concernes a mans own particular.

And laſtly, in caſe the thing concerned thy ſelfe, which

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which was prayed for by others helping thee therein, what cauſe haſt thou but to thinke that it was granted for thy owne prayers, and not for theirs onely? ſeeing God ſtirred up their hearts to pray for thee, and gave thee a heart to pray for thy ſelfe, and beſides, gave thee the thing which thou deſiredſt: which argues thou art beloved aſwell as they, and accepted as well as they. *I know this ſhall turn to my ſalvation through your prayer*, ſaith S. *Paul*, *Phil.* 1. 19. though their prayers went to the buſineſſe, yet had not S. *Paul* beene accepted himſelfe, the prayers of all the men

in

Chap. 4. in the world, would have done him but little good. God may heare the prayers of the godly, for wicked men, when they doe not pray themselves, in temporall things; so hee did heare *Moses* for *Pharaoh*, *Abraham* for *Abimelech*; and he may heare godly men the sooner for others prayers; so hee heard *Aaron* and *Miriam* the sooner, for *Moses* his sake, *Numb.* 12. 13. But if God stirs up thy heart to pray for thy selfe, as well as others for thee; then God that gave thee a heart to pray, hath heard thy prayers also, and hath had a respect to them more in it then to theirs, because

becauſe it concerned thy ſelfe, as a more ſpeciall mercy unto thee. Chap. 5

CHAP. V.

Common *directions helpfull in all caſes and prayers. Firſt, from ſuch* obſervations *as may bee taken, from* before, *and* in praying.

HAving premiſed theſe Caſes, I come now to more *generall* and *common directions* to helpe you in diſcerning and obſerving the minde of God, and his anſwers to you in your prayers. All which directions

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ctions are ſuch, as may bee helpefull in all the forementioned caſes, and in all ſorts of prayers whatever. And they are taken from *obſervations*, to bee made upon your prayers, &c. Both *before*, *in*, and *after* praying.

§. 1. *Before*: when God prepares the heart to pray.

Firſt, *Before praying*, when God beſpeakes a prayer, (as I may ſo ſpeak) that is, when God ſecretly ſpeakes to the heart to pray much about a thing; I expreſſe it thus according to that phraſe of *David*, Pſal. 27. 8. *Thou ſaidſt ſeeke my face*: and I ſaid, *Thy face Lord will I ſeeke*: now God then ſpeakes to the heart to pray; when not onely hee puts upon the

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the duty by ſaying to the conſcience, This thou oughteſt to doe: but Gods ſpeaking to pray is ſuch, as his ſpeech at firſt was, when hee made the world, when hee ſaid, *Let there be light, and there was light*: ſo hee ſayes, Let there be a prayer, and there is a prayer, that is, hee powres upon a man *a ſpirit of grace and ſupplication*, a praying diſpoſition; hee puts in motives, ſuggeſts arguments and pleas to God; all which you ſhall finde come in readily, and of themſelves; and that likewiſe with a quickning heat, and inlargement of affections, and with a lingring, and longing,

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ing, and reſtleſſeneſſe of ſpirit to bee alone, to powre out the ſoule to God, and to vent and forme thoſe motions and ſuggeſtions into a prayer, till you have laid them together, and made a prayer of them. And this is a *ſpeaking* to the heart: and obſerve ſuch times when God doth thus, and neglect them not; then to ſtrike, whileſt the iron is hot; thou haſt then his eare, it is a ſpeciall opportunity for that buſineſſe, ſuch an one as thou mayeſt never have the like. Suitors at Court obſerve *molliſſima fandi tempora*, their times of begging, when they have

Kings

Kings in a good mood, which they will bee ſure to take the advantage of; but eſpecially if they ſhould finde that the King himſelfe ſhould beginne of himſelfe to ſpeake of the buſineſſe which they would have of him: and thus that phraſe of *Pſalm.* 10. 17. is underſtood by ſome, that *God prepares the heart, and cauſeth the eare to heare*; that is, hee faſhions it, and compoſeth it into a praying frame. And ſure it is a great ſign that God meanes to heare us, when himſelfe ſhall thus indite the Petition.

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And by the way let mee give this note of difference, betweene theſe

The difference betweene Satans unſeaſonable urging us to pray, and Gods moving us.

ſpeakings

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ſpeakings to the heart, and thoſe whereby Satan puts us upon ſuch duties at unſeaſonable houres and times; as when wee are otherwiſe neceſſarily to bee imployed in our callings, to eate, or to ſleepe, &c. then to put upon praying, is a device of his hee uſeth, to tire out new converts with. The difference will appeare in this, the devill comes in a violent imperious manner upon the conſcience, but inlargeth not the heart a whit unto the duty: but whenſoever God at ſuch extraordinary by-times doth call upon us, hee fits and prepares the heart, and fills the ſoule with holy ſuggeſtions,

geſtions, as materialls for the duty; for whatſoever he calls to, he gives abilities withall to the thing he calls for. Chap. 5.

And thus uſually when hee will have any great matters done and effected, hee ſets mens hearts a worke to pray, by a kinde of gracious pre-inſtinct; hee ſtirres them up and toucheth the ſtrings of their hearts, by his Spirit ſent downe upon them: Thus againſt the returne of the captivity he ſtirred up *Daniels* heart, *Dan.9.1. Hee knowing by bookes*, the time to be neere expiring, was ſtirred up to *ſeek God*: and ſo hee that made this Pſalme, *Salvation being* Dan.9.2.

then

Chap. 5. *then nigh, ver.* 9, 10. then God ſtirred him up to pray, and pen this prayer for their returne: which God had foretold hee would doe, *Ier.* 29. 10, 11, 12. For having promiſed *ver.* 10. *I will cauſe you to returne after ſeventy yeares: Then* (ſayes hee, *ver.* 12.) *ſhall ye call upon me, and ye ſhall goe and pray unto mee, and I will hearken unto you:* he ſpeaks it not onely by way of command, what it was they ought to doe; but as prophecying alſo what they ſhould doe; for then he meant to ſtirre up their hearts; as then hee did, as appeares by thoſe fore-mentioned inſtances. Therefore obſerve what things,

things, God, thus by an inſtinct doth inlarge thy heart to pray for at times, and ſometimes at extraordinary by-times, when haply thou didſt not think to pray about any ſuch thing, yet hee then ſtirred thee up moſt, it may be, as thou wert walking, &c. and having ſpare time, hee drawes thee into his preſence, and moves thee in that manner ſpecified.

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§. 2.

2. *In prayer:* Gods *ſpeaking* to the heart in prayer, an evidence of hearing: which may be diſcerned, 1. By giving a quiet reſt of ſpirit about the thing prayed for, in and by prayer.

Now ſecondly: as God thus ſpeakes to the heart to pray, ſo alſo *in praying*; and his *ſpeaking* to the heart *in prayer* may be diſcerned by theſe particulars.

1. When God quiets, and

Chap. 5. and calmes, and contents the heart in *prayer*, which is done by ſpeaking ſomething to the heart, though what is ſpoken, be not alwayes diſcerned: If you ſhould ſee one, who was an earneſt and importunate ſuitor, and exceeding anxious when hee went in to a great man, but behold him after comming out from him contented, and quieted, and cheerefull in his ſpirit, you would conceive that certainly ſomething had beene ſaid to him, which gave him encouragement, ſatisfaction, and contentment in his ſuit; Thus when thou goeſt to God, and haſt beene importunate in a buſineſſe,

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ſineſſe, (as ſuppoſe for Chriſt, *Oh give me* Chriſt, *or elſe I die!*) and thy deſires were exceedingly up for it; But thou riſeſt up with thy minde calmed and ſatisfied, and feeleſt the anxiouſneſſe, the ſolicitude of thy heart about the thing taken off, and diſpelled; This is a good ſigne that God hath heard thy *Prayer*, and hath ſpoken ſomething to thy heart, which makes it thus compoſed. When *Hannah* out of much bitterneſſe, and with ſtrong deſires (which by a long delay had been made more violent, ſo as her heart was much diſquieted (for, *Prov.* 13.12. *Hope*, and by the

Chap. 5. the ſame reaſon, deſire alſo *deferred makes the ſoule ſicke*) when out of the abundance of her griefe, *ſhee had powred her ſoule out before the Lord*, 1 Sam. 1.16. *Eli* the *Prieſt* joyning in prayer alſo for her, *The Lord grant thy petition:* after that *prayer* ſhe found her heart ſo quieted, *that ſhee looked no more ſad*, as the Text ſaies there; She aroſe quieted, and calmed, and it was that prayer, that did both fill *Elies* mouth, with that word of prophecy, and her heart with quietneſſe, and a ſecret word from God accompanying it, that did ſtill thoſe waves: and accordingly God gave her a Son,

Son, a Son of her desires. And the like God doth now, by speaking (as I said) something to the heart: as by dropping in some promise or other into the heart, or some like consideration; saying as it were to the heart, even as *Eli* from God did to her, *The Lord grants thy petition*; As to S. *Paul*, when hee was earnest with God about removing his buffetings by *Satan* (which whether they were the stirring up a lust, or temptations of *blasphemy*, I doe not now dispute) *I besought God thrice*, that is, earnestly (saies hee,) *that it might depart*; and to this hee had an answer in

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Chap. 5. the meane time given him till it ſhould bee taken away; enough to ſtill and quiet him, ſo 2 *Cor.* 12.8,9. And *he ſaid*, that is, in *prayer* the Lord did put in this conſideration and promiſe into his thoughts, And *he ſaid unto me, my grace is ſufficient for thee, and my power is made perfect in weakneſſe:* This anſwer thus comming in, this promiſe thus ſeaſonably ſuggeſted, ſtayed and quieted *Pauls* heart. In like manner thou haſt (it may bee) beene long *praying* againſt poverty, or the like diſtreſſe, and God lets fall this or the like promiſe into thy heart, *I will* Heb.13.5. *never leave thee, nor forſake thee*

thee, which quiets and contents thy minde. This is an answer, and observe such answers, for they are precious.

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2. If whilest thou art *a praying*, God doth draw nigh to thy soule, and revealeth himselfe to it, in and upon such, or such a particular petition. As in case thou didst mainely intend when thou diddest begin to pray, to set thy selfe to beg some temporall mercie at his hands, some great matter for the good and prosperity of the Church, (as *Daniel*, *Chap. 9. did set himselfe* to seeke God for the returne of the Captivity:) and even before thou commest

§. 3. 2 Whē God draws nigh & reveales His love in and upon such a petition.

Chap. 5. to aske it, or in asking it, God ſmiles upon thee, welcomes thee, falleth about thy neck and kiſſeth thee: This thou art to obſerve as a ſigne hee heares thy *prayer*, and accepteth both thee and it; when there is ſuch a ſtrong ſenſe of GODS favour, and preſence, whileſt thou art upon ſuch a ſuit and requeſt, more than at other times, or then in other paſſages of the ſame *prayer*, this is a token God heares thee, in that particular, and thou art to obſerve this his ſpeaking to thy heart: When thus thou ſhalt no ſoone come into his preſence to enquire of him, bu

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hee ſayes, *Here I am*, as the promiſe is, *Eſay* 58.9. Therefore, *Pſal.*69.17,18. *Heare me ſpeedily* ſayes *David, and* (that I may know thou heareſt mee) *draw nigh to mee*: therefore when God drawes nigh to thee, it is a ſigne hee heares thee. *Daniel* having *faſted* and *prayed* for three weekes together, *Dan.* 10. 2,3: Then an *Angell* came, and one of the three *Perſons* came and told him hee was a man *greatly beloved, ver.* 11 and 19. when in like manner God by his Spirit comes downe, and meets thee, and tels thy heart in ſecret that thou art *His beloved*, and *He is thine*, then

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then thy *prayers* are certainely heard: for if hee accepts thy perſon, much more thy *prayers*, 1 *Iohn* 5.19, 20. Men, falſe men, (*falſe upon the ballance*, as *David* ſpeaks, when they come to bee tryed and weighed,) they will out of cunning uſe ſuitors moſt kindly then, when they meane to put them off, and deny them their requeſts: But God who is truth and faithfulneſſe it ſelfe, doth not uſe ſo to deale, but when he means to anſwer the *prayer*, Hee withall ſometimes reveals his free grace moſt, to the end they may ſee and acknowledge the fountaine of all, to be his everlaſting

lasting love, and so take the thing granted as a fruit of it, and thereby come to bee the more abundantly thankfull. Chap. 5.

Onely let mee adde this Caution, which may bee of great use to you. That it is not alwayes, infallibly true, that when God drawes nigh to you in a particular request, that that request in particular, shall bee granted in that manner you desired; but it is a certaine evidence that thy *prayer* is heard, and that the thing thou askest is agreeable to his will, and that hee approves of thee and thy request exceedingly, and thinketh the better of thee for it,

A caution: That yet this is not alwaies an infallible signe the thing is granted, though that the prayer is accepted.

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and hee will give thee it, or ſomething that is better. There may be herein and ſometimes is a miſtake of Gods meaning, to thinke that alwayes, then the thing ſhall be granted, when God drawes nigh to a man: experience ſometimes ſhewes the contrary.

Queſt. But you will ſay, Why doth God draw ſo nigh if hee meanes not to grant it?

Anſw. The reaſons why God ſometimes drawes nigh when he grants not the thing.

1. Hee ſhewes thereby His *approving will* of the thing *prayed* for. Now GOD approves many things, hee decrees not. There is his *approving will*, and his decreeing will. God may ſhew his *approving*

ving will of the thing thou askeſt, (as ſuppoſe it bee in view a matter which is of great conſequence for the Church;) which hee doth for thy encouragement: but yet it followes not, that his decreeing will is for the accomplſhment of that very thing in particular.

2. God may accept the perſon and the *prayer*, when hee doth not grant the thing prayed for; and by that drawing nigh witneſſe his acceptation of thy perſon and the *prayer*. Yea,

3. That revealing of himſelfe is oftentimes all the anſwer he intended to ſuch a *prayer*, and it is an-

Chap. 5. ſwer enough too, to enjoy in the ſtead of a particular mercy the aſſurance of Gods love. As ſuppoſe thou didſt pray againſt ſome evill comming upon his Church, which he yet intends to bring; which hee did ſet thy heart a worke to *pray* againſt, thereby to manifeſt the ſincerity thereof; and then hee ſeeing thee thus ſincere drawes nigh to thee, and tells thee, however, it ſhall goe well with thee, and that thou art greatly beloved of Him: Thou art ſometime to take this for all the anſwer hee meanes to give. And this hee doth ſometimes alſo to content the heart, and prepare

prepare it for a deniall in the thing: whereas, otherwiſe the deniall of what a Chriſtian hath beene earneſt in, might occaſion (as in many it doth) a queſtioning and doubting of Gods love.

§.4. God ſometimes ſtirs up a particular faith of aſſurãce in ſome buſineſſes.

3. When *God ſtirres* up in the heart a particular faith in a buſineſſe: as ſometimes Hee doth, and upholds the heart to wait for it, maugre all diſcouragements. So hee did in *David*, *Pſal.* 27.3. *David* was then in great hazards by reaſon of *Saul* or *Abſalom*, and thoſe ſuch and ſo often, as that to ſenſe and outward probabilities hee was like never to live quietly againe at *Ieruſalem*

Chap. 5. *ſalem*, and enjoy Gods Ordinances there in peace; but for this *David* had *prayed*, and had made it as the grand requeſt of his whole life (as every man hath ſome one great requeſt of all other, even as Hee hath ſome ſpeciall grace above all other, or gift, &c. ſo requeſt to God next to His ſalvation, as haply for his Miniſtery, or the like, therefore ſaies *David*, *verſe* 4. *This one thing have I deſired*) and accordingly God gave him a ſpeciall faith in this thing above all other, becauſe it was his great requeſt, *In this will I be confident*, *verſe* 3. And though *an hoſte* of men ſhould againe

gaine and againe *incompasse mee*, saies hee, yet *in this I will be confident*, that I shall still escape, and see *Ierusalem* againe, and enjoy the Ordinances and live in *peace*; and though his *faith* failed him often (as in the persecution of *Saul* it did) for he said hee *should one day perish by the hand of Saul*: yet at other times his faith was marvellously upheld, and hee was *confident* in this. Hee used not to be so, in other requests thus absolutely particularly and distinctly, and therefore he saies, *In this, &c.* As there is a witnesse of the *Holy Ghost* immediate to the heart, sealing up adoption to a mans

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1 Sam. 27. 1.

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mans perſon, ſo in ſome caſes, there is the like teſtimony for the obtaining of ſome eminent thing we have asked. Which particular ſpeciall faith, doth in a kinde of ſimilitude anſwer to the faith of miracles of old, whereby a man had a particular confidence that God would doe ſuch a miracle by him: ſo in and by meanes of prayer, in ſome things there may bee a particular ſtrengthening and aſſuring the heart, that God will doe ſuch a thing for a man: which I confeſſe is rare and extraordinary, as alſo that immediate teſtimony concerning our perſons is, which many want that goe to heaven.

And

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And haply this other concerning the accompliſhment of ſpeciall mercies, is much more rare; and but in ſome buſineſſes; and is a thing which ſome men are not acquainted with, but yet may bee in ſome caſes exiſtent to ſome mens ſpirits, as it was to *Davids* in the thing mentioned.

A caution, that herein a conditionall evidence be not taken for abſolute.

And concerning this alſo I will alſo adde a Caution, as about the former. That it doth not alwayes fall out upon all ſuch kind of evidences made to a mans ſpirit, and that by God, that the thing prayed for doth come to paſſe. For theſe very perſwaſions ſtirred up by God may

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may bee and are often but *conditionall*, though thus immediately made to a mans ſpirit, and are ſo to bee underſtood, and not peremptory and abſolute. It cannot bee imagined that all theſe ſhould alwayes be of greater abſoluteneſſe and peremptorineſſe, than were many of thoſe revelations made by God to the Prophets, wherein Hee manifeſted his gracious purpoſe towards ſuch a man or people, either to vouchſafe them ſuch a mercy, or bring ſuch a judgement; which forewarnings though they were particular and expreſſe, yet limited and intended with

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with a condition, according to the performance, or not performance of which, it fell out, either the judgement expreſly threatned was diverted, or that good thing which was as directly and fully promiſed, was not beſtowed: as it was in the caſe of *Ionas* threatning the deſtruction of *Nineveh*; and ſo in the promiſe concerning *Ely's* houſe, 1 *Sam.*2.30. *I ſaid indeed that thy houſe, and the houſe of thy father ſhould walke before mee for ever, but now the Lord ſayes, It ſhall not bee ſo:* For they had broken the condition which was implied in it; they had deſpiſed the Lord;

Chap. 5. Lord, *and them that deſpiſe me*, ſaies God there, *I will deſpiſe*. In like manner is Gods meaning expreſſed towards us in ſuch like perſwaſions wrought in us by prayer, to be underſtood; as that ſuch mercies will ſurely come to paſſe, but ſtill under a condition of obedience, and performing of thoſe vowes, which a man joyned with thoſe his petitions, to move the Lord to grant the things, which if a man faile in, or ceaſeth to goe on to beleeve, it may and doth often come to paſſe, that things fall out contrary to that perſwaſion, and then wee are apt to queſtion whether it

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it was from God or no; which it might bee, and truely wrought by his Spirit, and yet not alwayes abſolutely meant, (that was your miſtake ſo to take it) but conditionally onely. For in ſuch great requeſts of the ſoule unto *God*, there uſe to paſſe mutuall covenants betweene God and us; and Indentures are drawne and ſealedunto by us, that is, we in prayer, offer and promiſe to doe thus and thus, if God will vouchſafe us ſuch a mercy, and plead it to God to move him to beſtow it; and God, he thereupon (it may bee) ſeales a covenant on his part to grant the thing, & works

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works ſuch an undoubted perſwaſion; but if wee in that *interim* of waiting for that mercy, doe deale falſely in that covenant which we made; and this even whileſt wee are yet in dependance upon God for it; whereby it appears that we would have done ſo much more after wee ſhould have received it once; in this caſe Goddenies the thing, and yet notwithſtanding, that perſwaſion and evidence was from God that heard the prayer. He ſaid indeed hee would doe thus and thus for thee: (as he told *David, I would have given thee much more:*) becauſe thou ſaidſt to him, thou wouldſt walk

walke thus and thus, or didſt vow this or that to him; thou faileſt in thy word, upon which *God* uttered his; and thereupon ſayes God as to *Ely*, *Now it ſhall not be ſo*, and yet God had ſpoken it afore, and not Satan, nor thine owne heart onely.

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4. When God doth put a reſtleſſe importunity into the heart, maugre all diſcouragements. So in that *Pſal.* 27. 4. *One thing I have deſired, and I will ſeek after it*, that is, as I have ſought it, ſo I will not leave ſeeking to God for it: when God maintaines this in the heart, it is a ſigne hee heares, and will anſwer: for you know the Para-

§. 5. Whē God puts a reſtleſſe importunity into the heart, to pray for a particular mercy.

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Parable, that the *unjuſt Iudge* heard her for her *importunity*; therefore when God puts an importunity into the heart, he meanes to heare.

A double importunity: one accepted, not the other.

Onely this likewiſe is to be added in this, There is a double importunity: one out of ſuch an inordinate deſire to a thing, as the heart knows not how to be without ſuch a mercy, and ſo continues to aske, but *asketh amiſſe*, and ſo *receives not*, *Iam.* 5. But there is an importunity joyned with a ſubjection to *Gods* will; which when it runs along with it, then God hath ſtirred it up, and then looke for ſomething to come; otherwiſe you may

may bee importunate, as *they ſeeke mee daily*, when yet God heard not, *Eſay* 58.2. Chap. 6.

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Further Obſervations *to bee made, on the diſpoſitions and carriage of our hearts*, after *Prayer: untill the iſſue of the thing prayed for.*

§. 1. Whē God gives an obedient dependant heart, in walking before him.

NExt: *after thou haſt prayed*, obſerve, what God doth towards thee.

As firſt, how hee doth guide thy feete and heart *after praying*: there is much in that: that which was the

Chap. 6. the Spirit of ſupplication in a man when hee prayed, reſts upon him as the ſpirit of obedience in his courſe; ſo as that dependance hee hath upon God for the mercie hee ſeekes for, is a ſpeciall motive, & meanes to keepe him fearfull of offending, and diligent in duty; to looke to his paths to walke and behave himſelfe as becomes a ſuitor, as well as to come and pray as a ſuitor. Thus *David*, hee walked by this principle, *Pſal.66.18. If I regard iniquity in my heart, God will not heare mee*; that conſideration ſtill came in as a curb unto ſinne; and without this a man provokes God, and ſo caſts himſelfe

himſelfe behind-hand againe, and by ſinning loſeth what ground hee had got by praying. Therefore *David, Pſal.* 145.8,9, 10. when he was to pray, even as for his life, (as then he did, it being a deliverance from his enemies he ſought) he ſpecially prayes God to direct him and keepe him, that hee might not ſinne againſt him; for hee knew by ſinning hee ſhould enervate and ſpoile all his prayers: not onely *heare mee ſpeedily* (ſaies hee) but alſo *Cauſe mee to know the way wherein I ſhould walke*; *Teach me to doe thy will*; this hee eſpecially praies for, and more then for deliverance, for Chap. 6.

Chap. 6. elſe hee knew God would not heare him. Therefore when thou art in treaty with God for any mercy, obſerve, doth God ſtill after praying keepe thee in a more obedient frame of ſpirit? it is a ſigne hee intends to anſwer thee; as in like manner, when hee keepes thee from uſing ill meanes, &c. When hee meant to give *David* the Kingdome, hee kept him innocent, and his heart tender, that it *ſmote* him but for *cutting off the lap of Sauls garment*: he was not ſo tender after. Therefore in *Pſal.* 18. when hee was delivered from all his enemies, hee ſayes, *God dealt with him according to his*

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uprightneſſe: for I kept my ſelfe from mine iniquity. So alſo *Pſal.* 27.11.

2. When *God* after prayer ſtrengthneth the heart to wait for the mercy. So *Pſal.* 27. *ult.* *David* having prayed, ſayes to his ſoule, *Wait on the Lord, be of good courage, and he will ſtrengthen thy heart.* Honeſt men, when they nouriſh hopes in one that is in dependance on them, who waiteth and is obſequious upon the hopes he hath of a ſuite, uſe not to deny him: t were diſhoneſty in them o keepe a man underhand, nd then fruſtrate his xpectations; Therefore hen God keeps thy ſoule fter praying in ſuch a de-

2. When God gives a heart to wait for and expect the mercy.

Chap. 6. pendant frame, looke for ſome good anſwer. And indeed when a man hath prayed long, in the end he begins to *wait* (as I may ſo ſay) *rather thã pray* (though he pray ſtill) becauſe now he looks God ſhould performe: before, and at firſt, he told the Lord he *deſired* it, but now hee can with ſome boldneſſe tell him, that *he waits for it and expects it*. The *hope* of a godly man and his expectation *ſhould make him aſhamed* if it were not anſwered, therefore in this caſe anſwers uſe to come.

Both theſe two laſt wee have together joyned, *Pſa.* 37.34. *Wait on the Lord, & keep his wayes, and he ſhall exalt thee.*

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CHAP. VII.

Observations *to be made after prayer, upon the issue of what was prayed for: and first*, if accomplished, *whether as the fruit of prayers, or out of common providence*; *Helps herein.*

WHen a man hath thus waited, and kept his way, then let him observe the *issue* and conclusion of what he sought for, how things are cast by God. Now of *necessity*, one of these two must fall out, that either the thing desired is *accomplished*, or *not accomplished*; and in either

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ther of theſe he may come to ſpie out anſwers to his prayers; for prayer may be anſwered, though the thing be not done.

I meane to inſiſt ſeverally on theſe.

§. 1. *God* ſometimes anſwers the prayer fully in the way and manner deſired.

1. If the thing thou prayedſt for doth come to paſſe, then what needeſt thou doubt of an anſwer, and whether God heard thee or no? For thou beholdeſt it with thine eyes: and ſo often it falls out, that God doth grant according to the deſires of a mans heart; and not onely ſo, but alſo *fulfills his counſell* therein, as it is, *Pſal.* 20. 4. that is, fulfils not onely his deſire, and aime of his prayer, but in tha

very

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very way, by that very meanes, which his judgement and counſell pitcht upon in his own thoughts. The *deſire* of the heart may bee ſatisfied, when GOD gives ſome other thing, but the *counſell of* the heart is then fulfilled, when a man is anſwered in that particular, which his owne judgement picht upon as beſt for him. For counſell is an act of the underſtanding, deliberating about means to an end, and directing to chooſe a particular meanes tending to an end: ſo that as *Eliphaz* ſayes to *Iob*, 22. 27, 28. *Thou ſhalt make thy praier to God, and hee ſhall heare thee: and decree a thing,*

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and it ſhall bee eſtabliſhed to thee, that is, a man is guided to decree and pitch upon ſuch mercies in his prayers, as God makes good in particular: hee ſayes what hee would have and God performes it: and this priviledge thou ſhalt have (ſaies *Eliphaz* there) if thou wilt turne to him, and bee *acquainted with him*, and *receive the Law from his mouth*: thou ſhalt not erre in praying; but what thou ſetteſt upon to pray for, ſhall bee accordingly granted to thee; ſuch a man ſhall have the priviledge, *Fingere ſibi fortunam* in a right ſenſe, to bee his owne chooſer, and carver of his owne mer-

mercies; and as Christ said, *Be it according to thy faith*, so *God sayes* sometimes, *Be it according to thy prayers*; and *Eliphaz* speaks of it as of a speciall favour, that whereas other mens prayers are answered obliquely, thine sayes hee shall be answered directly, which is more comfortable; as direct beames are, and have more heate in them than collaterall and oblique. Thus if a man will heare God and obey him, God will heare him: for if a man be subject to *Christs Kingly Office*, his *Propheticall Office* shall guide him, and cause him not to erre in his Petitions; but by an unerring

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providence and preinſtinct infuſed by his Spirit, God will ſo guide him, as to ask even that very thing which God intends to give; whereas of himſelfe *hee knowes not what*, nor how to aske. So *David* asked long life, and *God gave it him*, *Pſal.* 21. 2, 3, 4. God not onely gave him his hearts deſire, but the *requeſt of his lips*, *ver.* 2. *Hannah* askt a ſonne, and God anſwered her in the very thing ſhee deſired, and therefore ſhee called him *Samuel*, 1 *Sam.* 1. 20. *Becauſe* (ſayes ſhe) *I askt him of the Lord:* and *Verſe* 27. *For this child I prayed, and the Lord* (did not give another thing in ſtead of it, but)

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but) *hath given mee my Petition I asked of him.* So, 1 *Chro.* 4. 10. *Iabesh called on God* (tis said) *and God granted him the thing hee requested.* And thus *God* often deales with his children. And to this end hath God given us his *Spirit*; and made *Christ Wisedome unto us*, who knowes what is good for us, though wee doe not. And hath therefore also commanded us to spie out mercies for our selves, and then come to him for them: and to this end hath made such particular promises of particular mercies, which hee would have us have an eye unto in our prayers; all which is, because often he meanes

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Yet our hearts are often jealous, whether it be an answer to prayer, or out of common providéce.

meanes to bestow the very things we aske.

And yet because, although wee have the very things wee did aske and desire, such is the jealousie & infidelity of our hearts, that we often discerne not, nor acknowledge that it was our prayers, that obtained them from God: but we are apt, when once wee have them, either to looke but to things below, and the second causes of them, though before wee did earnestly seeke them of God, or else still distrustfully to question whether or no it was at our prayers that hee granted them, or out of common providence. Thus *Iob* in his

his distemper, *Iob 9. 16. although I had called, and God had answered mee, yet* (saies hee) *I would not beleeve that hee had hearkened to my voice*, that is, not that he did it in respect to my prayer and request, because hee now deales so severely with mee, *For he breaketh mee with a tempest*, Verse 17. And thus doe our distrustfull hearts, (which are apt to bee unsatisfied with all the cleerest pledges of Gods favour, and still to misconstrue and pervert them,) although God doth answer us upon our calling upon him, yet we will not beleeve that hee hearkened to our prayer in it. There-

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Therefore that you may bee further inabled to diſcerne, how, and when things you prayed for, come in by prayer; I give you theſe further directions.

§. 2. Directions to helpe to diſcerne this.

1 From *the manner of Gods performance:* God diſcovers a more then ordinary hand of providéce in things accõpliſht by prayer: inſtanced and diſcovered in 5. particulars.

1 When God doth a thing in anſwer to prayers, hee often doth it in ſuch a manner, that his hand may bee in a more then ordinary maner ſeene in it. There are few prayers, wherein a man hath ſought God much, but in the anſwers of them God diſcovers himſelfe much, and turnes many great wheeles in the accompliſhment of them, and *manifeſts* (as *David* deſires, *Pſal.* 17.7.) *his marvellous*

velous loving kindneſſe; and indeed, when God heares *prayers*, that have beene a long while a making, Hee ſhewes uſually half a miracle one way or other. Chap. 7.

Now GOD diſcovers his immediate hand in the anſwers of *prayers* many wayes.

1. When hee carries a thing through many difficulties, when there were a great many croſſe wards in a buſineſſe *prayed* for, the leaſt whereof would have kept the key from turning: when God ſhall make (as it were) a key on purpoſe to unlocke it; when God plots and contrives all the paſſages in a buſineſſe

1 By bringing it to paſſe through many difficulties.

Chap. 7. buſineſſe thou didſt *pray* for, and ſo accompliſheth it; This is a ſigne, it is a fruit of *prayer*, and that *prayer* had been a making that key all that while: So in bringing *David* to the Kingdome; *Ioſeph* out of priſon; *Mordecai* to honour: and likewiſe S. *Peter* out of priſon, which was done at the *prayers* of the Church, *Acts* 12. He was ſleeping between two ſouldiers: if they had waked, hee had beene diſcovered: and hee was in chaines, but they fall off, *ver.* 6,7. And the Keepers ſtood before the doore, but they minde him not, *verſe* 6. and when one watch is paſt, hee paſſeth qui-

quietly through another, *verse* 10. and when both those were past, an Iron gate flies open of its owne accord, *ver.* 10. Now such difficulties are there in many businesses, which yet in the end are accomplished by *prayer*: Iron chaines fall off, Iron gates, enemies hearts flie open of their owne accord; and though not in that miraculous manner, by the meanes of an *Angel*, yet no lesse wonderfully.

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Or secondly when God facilitates all meanes to accomplish the thing which was *prayed* for, so as all meanes doe in view conspire and combine in it, that thou hast winde and

Or secondly by facilitating all the means, & causing them to conspire to accomplish it.

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and tyde, and a faire day, and all the way paved; or as *David* sayes, *hast thy way made plaine before thee*; and there falls out a great conjunction and meeting of many circumstances together to effect it, which had influence into it, whereof if any one had beene wanting, haply the thing had not beene done; when the thing *prayed* for is thus granted, *prayer* then hath done it. Thus, when hee delivered the people of *Israel* out of *Egypt*, which was the accomplishment of their long desires and *prayers*, (*their cry came up*, the Text sayes) how were all things facilitated! they that detained

tained them to themſelves come, and intreate them to goe out, *yea, are urgent*, ſayes the Text; and that at *midnight*: nay, hire them to goe out, with their eare-rings; and *Pharaoh* himſelfe then parts lovingly and fairely with them, and deſires their *prayers, Bleſſe me alſo.* Yea, to ſhew there was no reſiſtance, the Text ſayes, *a Dog did not move his tongue*: The bruit creatures did not diſturb them, though at midnight, when thoſe Creatures uſe to bee moſt obſtreperous through noiſes.

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Exod. 12. 31, 33-35.

Ver. 32.

3. When hee doth it ſuddenly, and accompliſheth the thing thou haſt long

3. By bringing it to paſſe ſuddenly and unexpectedly.

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long *prayed* for, ere thou art aware of it: as the returne of the Captivity of *Babylon*, which was the concluſion of many *prayers*, was done in a trice, *they were as men in a dream*, *Pſal.* 126. 1. They could ſcarce beleeve it was ſo, when it was done, it was becauſe they had *ſowne* many *prayers* which *came up* on the ſudden, *ver.* 5, 6. So *Peter*, hee was faſt aſleepe, and did not ſo much as dreame of deliverance. So *Ioſephs* delivery out of priſon, and advancement to bee the greateſt man in the Kingdome, the ſuddenneſſe of it ſhewed it was Gods remembring of him, and hearing

hearing his prayers.

4. When God grants the thing with an overplus, above what wee did ask, and casteth many other mercies in together with that which wee long prayed for; this also may bee a signe God did heare our prayers in it: for when he doth heare indeed, hee useth *to doe above what wee did aske or thinke*, thereby the more to overcome the heart. So *David* asked *long life*, and hee gave him more than he asked, *Psal.* 21. 2, 3, 4, 5. So *Solomon* he asked but *wisdome*, and hee gave him more than he asked, *Peace, Riches, Honour*, and all with it, 1 *Kin.* 3. 12, 13. *Hannah* shee asked

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4 By doing above what was desired with addition of other mercies.

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ked but one male childe, 1 *Sam.* 1.10. but God gave her three ſonnes more and two daughters, *Chap.* 2.21. When prayers are anſwered, uſually mercies come thick, they come tumbling in; the thing we prayed for comes not alone: as when ſinnes are puniſhed, then miſeries alſo they come like armies in troops upon us: as *temptations* likewiſe come together, and *wee fall into many of them* at once, as S. *Iames* ſpeakes: Thus doe mercies alſo.

Iam.1.2.

5. By adding ſome ſpeciall circumſtance as a token of Gods ſpeciall hand in it.

5. When the thing is granted by prayers, there is often ſome particular circumſtance of providence concurrent with it, which

which is a token for good and ſealeth to us that it is from God; ſuch often as a man himſelfe takes notice of, and which others take notice of alſo. *Shew mee a token for good*, ſayes *David*, Pſal. 86. 17. *that others may ſee it and bee aſhamed:* and ſuch tokens doth *God* often make ſmall circumſtances to bee. Things ſmall in themſelves, may bee *magna indicia*, great ſignes and tokens: for example, *Moſes* and *Aaron*, and the *Iſraelites* had long cried to GOD for the deliverance of his people, and laid up many prayers; *their cry came up* as was ſaid; and when God doth deliver them, what

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Chap. 7. what tokens were there of good? and of Gods hand in it, and of his anſwer to their prayers? The Text notes (as was obſerved before) *that a dog did not barke at their going out*, Exod. 11. 7. which was a ſmall circumſtance, but it was *magnum indicium*, and ſo intended by God; for the Text addes, *That yee may know that God puts a difference between the Iſraelites and the Egyptians*. This was a token of Gods hand, to over-rule the tongues of rude bruit creatures, that uſe to ſtirre at ſuch unuſuall noiſes, and at travellers eſpecially in the night. So when *Iſaac* and *Abraham*, and his

his ſervant alſo, had prayed for a Wife for *Iſaac*, ſee by what a token God ſhewed he had heard their prayers, *Rebekkah* was the firſt that came out to the ſervant ſent to bring a wife for him: and if ſhee bee the woman appointed for *Iſaac* (ſaies the ſervant) *Let her offer me drinke, and my Camels alſo:* this was a ſmall thing in appearance, but a great *indicium* of Gods hand in it, and therefore the ſervant *bowed* at it, and *worſhipped:* and the ſigne in it ſelfe was ſuch, as argued a good nature in her, and a kinde courteous diſpoſition, which therefore (it may bee) hee ſingled out,

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Gen. 24. 13, 14.

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as a token of a meet wife, as a thing eſpecially to bee looked at in the marriage choiſe.

§. 3. Obſervation from the time wherein the thing prayed for is accompliſht, as,

Againe, the conſideration of the *time*, wherein the things we have asked, are granted, may much helpe us to diſcerne, whether it bee in anſwer to our prayers. For GOD, who doth all things *in weight and meaſure*, ſhewes his *wiſedome* and *love*, as much in the *ſeaſon*, as in giving the thing it ſelfe. GOD conſidereth all times of thy life, and ſtill chooſeth the beſt and fitteſt to anſwer thy prayers in, *In an acceptable time have I heard thee*. So *Eſay* 49.8. As *David* (in like manner ſayes

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he prayed *in an acceptable time, Pſal.69.13.* So accordingly God anſwers in the beſt and moſt acceptable time to us; for *he waits to be gracious, for he is a God of judgement, Eſay* 30.18. that is, Hee is a wiſe God that knowes the fitteſt times and ſeaſons, wherein to ſhew kindneſſes, and to deale forth his favours in.

1. Sometime the thing is accompliſht about the time wherein we are moſt inſtant in prayer.

As firſt, it may be, that at that very time when thou haſt beene moſt inſtant and earneſt, yea even whileſt thou art a praying, or preſently after, the thing is done and accompliſht. To this purpoſe is that of *Eſay* 65. 24. That as ſometimes *he heares be-*

Chap. 7. *fore they call* (which argues much love to give mercies unsought) so also *whilest they are speaking, I will heare*, and grant the thing, which argues no lesse love; and he culs out that time on purpose, that they might rest assured that it was in answer to their prayer. Thus to assure *Hezekiah* his prayer was heard, God sent the Prophet in unto him whilest hee was a *praying* and *weeping*, with *his head turned towards the wall*. So *Isaac* going out to *pray* in the field, meetes his *Rebekkah* then a comming; Gen. 24. 63 that blessing of a good Wife, being surely the great request temporall he

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hee was then in Treaty with God for: this *Rebekkah* was the fruit of many prayers. So when S. *Peter* was in prison, the Church being gathered together to pray for him, S. *Peter* comes and knocks *at the same houre*, *Acts* 12. from the 12. *ver.* to the 18. So as it often falls out herein, as to the Ruler in the Gospel, *Ioh.*4.52. who *inquiring* diligently, found *that the same houre that Christ had said to him, Thy sonne liveth, his son recovered, and so he beleeved, and his whole houshold*: So also here, that sometimes the thing is done, or the newes of it comes the same houre or soone after,

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wherein a man was praying about it, and haply then when the heart was moſt ſtirred about it, more than at any time elſe: this is a ſigne it was an anſwer of prayers, and may help to confirme a mans faith in it, as that alſo did his.

2. When granted in the fitteſt time.

Or ſecondly, when it is the moſt acceptable and every way the fitteſt time to have the thing granted. At that time, [1] when thou *hadſt moſt* *ncede*, and [2] when thy heart was *moſt fit for it*. For in anſwering prayers, God aimes eſpecially at two things: [1] To *ſhew his* *mercy*, that a man might magnifie and exalt that

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And [2] *To have the heart* ſatisfied and *filled with joy* and contentment in his anſwer, and the thing made ſweet, and a mercy indeed to him: in briefe, that his *goodneſſe might bee delighted in*, and *his mercy exalted.* And for theſe two purpoſes hee culs out ſuch times, when we have moſt need; and alſo when our hearts are moſt ſubdued, and our luſts mortified. For then wee are fitteſt to relliſh his goodneſſe alone, and not to bee drawne away with the carnall ſweetneſſe that is in the thing. The one you have expreſt, *Eſay* 30.18. *Hee waits to bee gracious to have his mercy exalted.* The ſe-

The fitteſt time knowne twowaies.

Chap. 7. cond intimated *Iames* 5. *Yee aske and receive not, because ye aske amisse, to consume upon your lusts*; Such prayers, whilest the heart is in this temper, the Lord denies, or deferres in mercie till the heart bee weaned.

1. When wee have most need.

For the first of these: As, suppose thou diddest pray long for assurance of salvation, and joy in the Holy Ghost, and when thou hadst most need of it, either when *thy spirit would have failed* without it, as *Esay* 57. 16. Or against some great affliction approaching, or some great encounter with the world for the Name of Christ, then God filled thy heart

heart with it, &c. that was the fitteſt time: now hath God heard thy prayer. As S. *Peter* hee was in Priſon, and had beene ſo for many dayes, as appeares by the fourth and fifth *verſes*, *Acts* 12. God could have delivered him at any time, while the Church prayed for him, *verſe* 5. But God kept him in on purpoſe, till that very night, when in the next morning *Herod* meant to bring him forth to execution, and then God delivered him at the prayers of the Church; then was the moſt fit time; As the *Pſalmiſt* ſayes, *The full time to have mercy on him was come.* And then

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Pſal. 102. 11.

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to receive an anſwer, is a ſigne God did it out of ſpeciall love, which love hee *would have exalted by thee*, as *Eſay* 30.18.

2. When the heart was beſt prepared to receive it, and moſt weaned from it.

If 2. when thy heart was *moſt fit* for the mercy, it was granted, then art thou alſo heard in an acceptable time: for God doth not with-hold mercies from thoſe that are his, out of want of love; neither ſo much for what is paſt, as for the preſent evill diſpoſition of their hearts, whereby they are unfit to receive them: and in this ſenſe likewiſe may that bee underſtood, that GOD *prepareth the heart*; and *heareth the Prayer*, *Pſal.* 10.17.

As

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As firſt, when thy heart is moſt weaned from that temporall mercy (ſuppoſing it ſuch) granted thee upon ſeeking of it: So *David*, when had hee the Kingdome in poſſeſſion given him? then, when hee was as a *weaned childe*, and had his high thoughts (which haply at the firſt newes of it had riſen in his minde) purged out, *Pſal.* 131.2. *I have no high thoughts, &c.* ſayes hee then; Thus, when thy heart had let all carnall ends goe, and had betaken it ſelfe alone to God, for thy portion to bee had alone out of him, then the thing prayed for comes to paſſe: this was the fitteſt

Chap. 7. fitteſt ſeaſon.

Object. But you will bee ready to ſay, To have a thing when my heart is taken off from it, and even contented not to have it, makes it to bee as no mercy: for where there is no deſire, there is no rejoycing.

Anſw. If thy deſire bee taken off the thing, then thou wilt rejoice the more in GOD now; and though the thing of it ſelfe ſhould now give thee leſſe ſatisfaction, yet God by the thing will give thee more, and he will make it up; for thou wilt reliſh his love and ſweetneſſe in it now, which is *better then life*, and therefore much better

ter than that thing enjoyed; and indeed the violence of the desire before, would have made it lesse sweet, for the thing alone would not have filled and contented that desire, when it was an inordinate lust, and so thou wouldst have beene vexed with it, rather than satisfied, and found a greater vanity in it: but now when it is become a subordinate desire unto God, that the desire is downe, and the heart quieted and contented with God in the thing: the heart sayes as she said, *I have enough*. So 2. likewise thou maist have an affliction thou prayedst long against, taken off then,

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Lev. 26. 41

then, when thy heart was moſt willing to *accept thy puniſhment* (as *Moſes*'s phraſe is,) and to ſubmit to God in it.

§. 4. A third ſort of obſervations, from the anſwerable proportion betweene Gods dealing in the accōpliſhment of it, and our prayers.

A third thing you are to obſerve concerning the accompliſhment of the thing prayed for, whereby you may diſcern whether granted in anſwer to prayers, is, when thou ſeeſt God in his dealings with thee, and anſwering of thee, to deale in a kinde of proportion with thy manner of praying and ſeeking of him, and of walking with him whileſt thou wert dependant on him, for ſuch or ſuch a mercy. And as you may ſee a proportion betweene

tweene ſinnes and puniſh-
ments, which are the re-
wards of them; that you
can ſay, ſuch a ſin brought
forth this affliction, it is ſo
like the Father: ſo you
might ſee the like pro-
portion betweene your
prayers, and your walking
with God, and Gods anſ-
wers to you, and his dea-
lings with you. So did
David, *Pſal.* 18. 24. *Accor-
ding to the cleanneſſe of my
hands hath hee recompenced
me, &c.* His ſpeech notes
ſome ſimilitude or like-
neſſe: as for example, The
more by-ends or carnall
deſires you had in pray-
ing, and the more you
mingled of theſe with
your holy deſires, and the
more

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more want of zeale, fervency, &c. were found in your prayers, the more you ſhall (it may be) finde of bitterneſſe mingled with the mercy, when it is granted; and ſo much imperfection, and want of comfort in it: ſo ſayes *David* in the ſame *Pſal. verſe* 25, 26. *With the pure thou wilt ſhew thy ſelfe pure*, Pure prayers have pure bleſſings; *& è contra: With the froward thou wilt ſhew thy ſelfe froward:* and againe, as you in praying ſometimes ſlackened and grew cold, ſo you might ſee the buſineſſe in like manner to coole, and caſt backward: as when *Moſes hands were downe, Amaleck* pre-

prevailed; but when they were *lifted up*, *Israel* had the better, *Exod.* 17. 12. God let him see a proportion, which argued his prayer was the meanes of prevailing. A man findes in praying, that his suite sometimes sticks, and goes not on as he expected, this is because hee gives not so good a fee as he was wont, and doth not ply *God*, and solicite him; but on the contrary, when hee was stirred up to pray, then still hee found things to goe well: by this a man may cleerely see, that it was the praier which God did heare and regarded. Thus likewise when a man sees hils and dales in a

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a buſineſſe, faire hopes often, and then all daſht againe, and the thing in the end brought to paſſe, let him looke backe upon his prayers: didſt not thou in like manner juſt thus deale with God? When thou hadſt prayed earneſtly, and thought thou hadſt even carried it, then daſh all againe, by interpoſing ſome ſin, and thus againe and againe? Herein God would have you obſerve a proportion; and it may helpe you to diſcern, how, and when they are anſwered and obtained by prayer; becauſe God deales thus with you therein in ſuch a proportion to your prayers.

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CHAP. VIII.

Seven Obſervations *more, from the* effects *which the accompliſhment of the* mercy *hath upon the heart, &c.*

FOurthly, thou mayeſt diſcerne whether they be in anſwer to thy prayers, by the effects upon thy heart.

§. 1. If the thing obtained drawes the heart neerer to God and to rejoyce in his favour in it, more than in the thing.

As 1. If the thing that is granted upon thy prayers, draw thy heart more neere unto God, it is then certaine, that it was granted as an anſwer to thy prayers. Things granted out of ordinary providence onely, doe increaſe our

Chap. 8. our luſts, and are ſnares to us; as *Saul* gave *David* his daughter *Michol* to be a ſnare to him: So *their*
Pſa. 69. 22. *full tables are made ſnares:* ſo God gave the *Iſraelites* their will, the things they deſired, but withall *gave them up to their luſts*, *Pſal.* 106. 15. hee gave them their requeſts, but ſent *leanneſſe into their ſoules*; the Quailes might fat ſome of their bodies that ſurvived, yet their ſoules grew leane: there was a curſe upon their Spirits: this new delicate food made their bodies more luſtfull, they *did eate and*
Exod. 32. 6 *drinke, and roſe up to play.* But things obtained by prayer are ſanctified to us, for

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1 Tim. 4. 5.

for every thing *is ſanctified by prayer*, ſo as it ſhall not inſnare nor intangle our hearts: a thing obtained by prayer, as it came from God, ſo a man will returne it to God, and uſe it for his glory: So *Hannah* having obtained *Samuel* by prayer, ſhee returnes him unto God, 1 *Sam.* 1. 27, 28. *For this childe I prayed, and God gave me my petition, and therefore alſo I have lent him to the Lord as long as he liveth.* If therefore thou findeſt this his dealing with thee, in anſwering thee, to bee a kindly motive to cauſe thee to mourne for ſin, and to bee as a reſtraint againſt ſinne, it is a ſigne it was the fruit of

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of prayer. Thus it wrought with *David*, *Psa.6.8. Away from me ye that work iniquity: God hath heard the voice of my weeping.*

Also if thou rejoyceſt in God, more than in the thing obtained: ſo *Hannah* begins her ſong when ſhee bleſſeth God for her child; *My heart rejoyceth in the Lord, &c.* 1 *Sam.*2.1. Shee rejoyceth not ſo much in the gift, as in the giver; and his favour more in this, that her prayer was anſwered, than in the thing obtained: this is a ſigne of having obtained the mercy through prayers, when it is thus ſanctified untoa mans ſpirit.

§. 2. Prayer anſwered enlargeth the heart with thankfulneſſe.

2. Prayers anſwered will

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will inlarge thy heart with thankefulneſſe, and thus uſually they doe; ſelfe-love makes us more forward to pray, then to give thankes; for nature is all of the craving and taking hand: but where grace is, there will bee no eminent mercy gotten with much ſtrugling, but there will bee a continued particular thankefull remembrance of it a long while after, with much inlargement: and *As prayers abounded, ſo will thankſgiving abound alſo. Hannah* ſhee makes a Song, 1 *Sam.* 1.2. Great bleſſings that are wonne with prayer, are worne with thankfulneſſe: ſuch a man will not ask

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ask new, but hee will withall give thankes for old. Thankfulneſſe, of all duties, proceeds from pure grace, therefore if the ſpirit ſtirs thee unto it, it is a ſigne he made the prayer; *What thankes ſhall I render to God, for the joy I have in you*, ſaith S. *Paul*, 1 *Theſſ.* 3. 9, 10? So in all his other Epiſtles, all thoſe hee writes to, as he prayes for them, ſo hee tells them, he gives thankes for them, and for their graces which he had prayed for. And if anſwering prayers for others, makes Saint *Paul* ſo thankfull, what when for himſelfe? Prayer and thankes, are like the double motion of the lungs, the

the ayre that is ſucked in by prayer, is breathed forth againe by thanks: Is thy heart afreſh inlarged, as to mourne for paſt ſins long ſince committed, ſo in like manner, to give thankes for paſt mercies wonne with long prayers, and this for a long while after: it is a ſign that they were obtained by prayer.

§. 3. If this encourageth thee to go to God againe.

3. If the mercy obtained doth encourage thee to goe to GOD another time, to pray againe the more confidently and fervently, it is a ſigne thou haſt got the former that way: For the *Holy Ghoſt* having once ſhewed thee this way of procuring mercy, hence it is, thou

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art thus ready to take the ſame courſe another time, *Pſal.*116.2. *The Lord hath heard mee, and I will call on him as long as I live.* I know (ſaies hee) now what courſe to take if I bee in any want, even to call upon him; and he calls upon others to doe ſo too.

§.4. It makes a man carefull to performe his vowsmade in prayer, to obtaine it.

4. When God having heard thy prayers upon ſolemne vowes made by thee, thy heart is made carefull to pay thoſe vowes which thou didſt make in the time of thy ſuing to GOD for that mercy, this may bee an argument to thee, the thing being granted, that thy prayer was heard. For firſt, it argueth, that thy

hear

heart it ſelfe doth ſecretly make ſuch an account, that upon them God did grant the thing, and thou doſt therefore make conſcience to returne all again to God in ſervice, as the condition of thy Indentures made with him; and as an homage due, and an acknowledgement for ever, that ſuch a mercy was won by prayer; and by this preſerveſt the memory of the receit of that mercy: vowes being of the nature of homage: and ſecondly, in this alſo it is an evidence that the thing was obtained by prayer, in that God cals for thoſe vowes from thee, by his Spirit in thy heart,

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and ſtirres thee up to performe them; it argues that in relation to thy prayers anſwered, He takes them as dues from thee, that having diſpatcht thy ſuite, Hee now calls for what was agreed to bee given him when it ſhould bee performed. And thirdly, in that alſo he doth accept the payment of theſe thy vows of thee, he acknowledgeth that thoſe vowes and prayers were heard: for as *Manoah* ſaid in another caſe, *If hee meant to have deſtroyed us, he would not have accepted a ſacrifice*: ſo in this caſe it may be ſaid, If God had not heard thy prayers, hee would not have accepted

Iudg. 13. 23

thy

thy vowes after thy praying. Thus *David*, *Pſal.66.* 13, 14. *I will pay thee my vowes, which my lips have uttered, and my mouth hath ſpoken, when I was in my trouble*; the reaſon follows, v.17,19. becauſe that *Verily God hath heard me, when I cryed to him*: and ſo *Eliphaz* in *Iob* doth connect and hang theſe two together, *Iob* 22.27. *Thou ſhalt make thy prayer to him, and he ſhall heare thee, and thou ſhalt pay thy vowes*: This which he ſpeakes of paying his vowes, was not onely as it was to bee his duty, but alſo as a conſequent that would follow the other, that when his prayers ſhould be heard, Chap. 8.

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he thereupon would performe his vowes: for his ſcope is to move *Iob* to turne to God, ſhewing what benefit would acrue to him by it, and amongſt others this: The hearing his prayers, and performing his vowes.

5. If a man ſees by faith, and acknowledgeth Gods ſole hand in the accõpliſhment.

5. When thou art inabled by faith, to ſee cleerly *Gods* hand ſhewed forth in the effecting of that mercy over and above the power of ſecond cauſes, and to acknowledge it to his glory: for the truth is, one maine cavilling reaſon in our blind hearts, whereby wee are uſually hindered and put by from apprehending our prayers to be anſwered, when

ye

yet the thing is done, wee ſhall finde to bee, that our eyes are terminated and bounded in ſecond cauſes, and not raiſed to ſee Gods hand in the thing: therefore on the contrary, when God inableth thee to ſee that hee hath done thee this kindneſſe: ſo as thy minde is cleere in it, this is a fruit of his hearing thy prayers: And this you will uſually finde to bee true, that *ſo much faith and dependance* as you had upon *God in prayer* for the obtaining of a mercy, *ſo much faith and acknowledgement you will have in the accompliſhment of it*. Parallel with this rule is that other, which in

Chap. 8. another caſe is uſually given, that in performance of duties, ſo much as the ſoule did goe out of it ſelfe to God, for ſtrength to performe them, ſo much, when they are performed, will the heart acknowledge *Gods* aſſiſtance and be humbled: And this is a ſigne of prayer being heard upon this ground, becauſe Gods end of hearing prayers is, that wee *might glorifie him.* So *Pſal.* 50.15. *Call upon mee in the day of trouble, and I will deliver thee, and thou ſhalt glorifie mee.* Therefore when the heart hath prayed much for a mercy, with dependance before the obtaining of it, and then

is

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is enabled to exalt God when it is obtained, it is a ſigne that God did it in relation to thoſe prayers. For there is that connexion made betweene theſe, as betweene the cauſe and the effect, *I will heare thee, and thou ſhalt glorifie mee*. *David*, when he was delivered out of all his troubles, (as when hee made that 18. *Pſal.* he was, as appeares by the title of it) then at the 6. verſe, he relates how he had prayed, and how hee was heard; and ſee thereupon how his heart was enlarged to acknowledge God alone to have done all, in the reſt of that Pſalme; ſo from the 27. and alſo from the

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31. ver. When wee see Angels from God, beyond the power of second causes descending, it is a signe, that prayers, as Angels, first ascended, and obtained that mercy. Thus also the Church *Esay* 26. having obtained those deliverances by prayer, ver. 17. (for which there she makes that song by way of thankfulnesse) she ascribes all unto God, ver. 12. *Thou hast wrought all our workes for us*, and ver. 18. *Verily we have not wrought any deliverance in the earth.*

§. 6. With the mercy, sometimes a speciall evidence comes in, that it is obtained by prayer.

6. When with the mercy there commeth the assurance of Gods love, and an evidence of his favour; when

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when GOD ſends not a bare token onely, but a letter alſo with it, to beare witneſſe of his love, in which the token is wrapt. I need not make that a ſigne, for when this comes with a mercy, it carries its owne evidence, you will then know well enough that it is the fruit of prayer.

§. 7. By the evẽt; things obtained by prayer, prove reall and ſtable mercies.

7. Laſtly, it will be evident by the *event*; things obtained by prayer have few thorns in them, the curſe is taken out, but what comes but by ordinary providence, comes as it were up of it ſelfe alone, and like the earth untilled, is full of thornes, and briers, and many vexations:

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ations: The reaſon is, for what comes in by prayer comes as a bleſſing, and *ſo no ſorrow is added to it*; and alſo becauſe prayer killeth thoſe inordinate luſts, which is the cauſe of that vanity and vexation which is in the things enjoyed. *But when the bleſſing of God maketh rich, he addeth no ſorrow with it*, *Prov.* 10.22. Things long deferred, at laſt obtained by praier, prove moſt comfortable, and in a ſetled manner ſuch; they prove ſtanding and ſtable bleſſings; and what trouble the heart was put to in the deferring, it is recompenced by the more ſetled conſtant immixt ſweetneſſe

neſſe in the enjoying; prayer having long perfumed it, and the thing being ſteeped therein, it proves exceeding pleaſant. So *Prov.* 13.12. *Hope deferred makes the heart ſicke, but when the deſire comes, it is a tree of life*, and heales that ſickeneſſe, and abundantly comforts the heart. Thus *Iſaac* found *Rebekkah* a great bleſſing, and *a comfortable* wife to him, *Gen.* 24. *ult.* Such a comfort alſo was *Iſaac* to *Abraham*, *Gen.* 17, 18, 19. *A ſonne* indeed, *a ſonne of laughter*, as his name ſignifies: and ſuch was *Samuel* to *Hannah*, ſhee had not onely a ſonne of him, but a good ſonne, a bleſſed ſon,

Goodwin, T.

Chap. 8. ſon, a Prophet, and the Judge of the people of God: whereas *Iacob* getting the bleſſing, but without prayer, how imbittered was it to him, (though a bleſſing to him in the event) by twenty yeeres baniſhment from his mothers houſe? When *Iſrael* themſelves ſet up a King, but not *by me*, as God ſaies, what a puniſhment was he to them? *given in wrath, and taken away in anger*: Hoſ. 13.11.

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CHAP. IX.

Conſiderations *to quiet the heart, and to help it to diſcerne an anſwer to, and acceptation of the prayer* when the thing is not accompliſht.

§. 1. The thing prayed for is not alwaies granted, when yet the prayer is heard.

BUt now the next and more difficult queſtion is, *When the thing is not granted*, how ſhall we then diſcerne and know, that God doth notwithſtanding heare the prayer?

Concerning which, I muſt premiſe this, that it is true, that alwayes the very thing it ſelfe deſired is not granted, when yet the prayer is heard.

Chriſt

Chap. 9. Christ prayed, *the Cup might passe from him*, which though some interpret the word *passing*, for the short continuance of the brunt, and that therefore in that respect hee was heard directly in what hee asked: yet if so, why was that clause *if it be possible*, added? that argues his petition was for a totall removall, yet with subjection to Gods will; for he knew there was no great impossibility in a short removall of it: nay, it was impossible but that it should passe, *Act.* 2. 24. But howsoever, it is plaine in *Moses*, about his going into *Canaan*: *Deut.* 3. 26. *I besought the Lord*, sayes

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sayes hee, *verse* 23. *and hee was angry with mee, and would not heare me, ver.* 26. Likewise ere I come to resolve the case, an objection is also to bee removed, which is,

That if the Spirit of GOD doth make every faithfull prayer in us, as *Rom.* 8. 26. it is said Hee doth; *wee know not what to pray for, but the Spirit helpeth our infirmities, &c.* and he *searcheth the deep things of God*, as it is said, 1 *Cor.* 2. that therefore hee knowing that GOD will not grant such a thing, you may thinke that hee should not stirre up the heart to pray for that which God meanes to deny, but alwayes

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wayes guide the heart a-right, and not let us erre or misse in the things wee *pray* for. To this, in briefe by way of answer.

An objection answered: That though the Spirit knowes Gods mind, and teacheth us what to pray for: yet the thing prayed for may not bee granted.

1. The Spirit makes not prayers in us, alwayes according to what Gods secret will and foreknowledge is, but according to his revealed will to us, both in his word, and in his providence, as things therein are presented to us, and doe lie before our view, and so not alwayes according to what hee meanes to doe, but according to what it is our duty to pray most for: for hee concurres to assist us to *pray*, as he doth in *preaching* or using other such like

like meanes and Ordinances, wherein though the Spirit knowes whom God meanes to convert, whom not, yet he assists us Ministers in our spirits oftentimes as much to *preach* to those hee meanes not to convert, as to those hee meanes to convert: Hee dealing with us therein according to what is our duty, not according to what is his decree. Chap. 9.

Againe, secondly, that phrase helps to answer this, when hee is said to *helpe our infirmities*, and therefore not according to his owne vast knowledge, doth he frame our *prayers*, but so, as hee applies his assistance to our infirme,

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infirme, weake, and narrow apprehenſions, and ſtirres up deſires in us to ſuch things, as according to our knowledge wee are in duty to conceive, and which by all wee can ſee, by what is afore us revealed in his providence, we thinke to be moſt for our good, and his glory; and God accepts ſuch *deſires as from us*, but yet *doth for us* according to the largeneſſe of his owne love.

§. 2. A miſtake to pray abſolutely for ſuch bleſſings as are not abſolutely promiſed.

And ſo now to come to the caſe propounded, and therein unto helps to pacifie, and direct the heart about thoſe *prayers* at which the things are not granted.

And

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And first, how diddest thou frame thy *prayer* for that thing which is denyed thee? Didst thou *pray* for it absolutely, and peremptorily as simply best for thee? thou must not then thinke much, if such a *prayer* bee denyed, for therein thou wentest beyond thy commission: but if thou didst pray for it conditionally, and with an (if) as *Christ* did, *if it be possible* (which instance is a strong ground for such kinde of *prayers*) and *not my will, but thy will be done*, so, as thou didst referre it unto, and trust *Gods* judgement in the thing, and not thine owne, onely didst put him in minde as thy duty

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duty was, of what was re-
preſented to thee as beſt
for thee in view, and ſo
left it to him to caſt, and
didſt referre it to His will
and wiſedome: Then thy
prayer may bee moſt fully
anſwered and heard, and
yet the thing denied; and
thou art to interpret, and
take Gods meaning and
minde revealed in the e-
vent in the beſt ſenſe,
which way ſoever it falls:
for otherwiſe, CHRIST
had not been heard, when
yet, the Text ſayes, *Hee*
was heard in all he feared,
*Heb.*5.7.

In which when we are denied we are to reſt in *Gods* judgment as beſt for us, and ſo interpret the prayer anſwered.

§. 3. There may be a reſervation in the denial, for ſome greater mercy.

2. Obſerve, if there
were not a *reſervation* in
that deniall, for ſome grea-
ter and further mercy,
whereof

whereof that deniall was the foundation. Thus oftentimes ſome great croſſe is prevented, by the deniall of a thing, which we were urgent for: if wee had had many of our deſires, we had been undone: So it was a mercy to *David*, that his childe was taken away, for whoſe life he was yet ſo earneſt, who would have beene but a living monument of his ſhame. It was alſo a mercy to *David*, that *Abſolom* was taken away, (whom ſurely he *prayed* much for, for he loved him much) who if he had lived, might have beene the ruine of him and his houſe. As a wicked mans deliverance and

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Chap. 9. and the granting his requeſt layes a foundation, and is a reſervation of him to a worſe Judgement: So, the deniall of a godly mans *prayer* is for his greater good, and is laid as a foundation of a greater mercy: [2] and againe, oftentimes the very deniall breakes a mans heart, and brings him nearer to God, puts him upon ſearching into his wayes, and eſtate, and in his *prayers* to ſee what ſhould bee amiſſe therein, which alone is a great mercy; and better then the thing, ſeeing by the loſſe of that one thing hee learnes how to *pray* better, and ſo to obtaine a hundred better

things afterward. Chriſt deſired *the Cup might paſſe*, it did not; and that was the foundation of our ſalvation, and the way to His glory: He being to paſſe through that ſuffering into His glory. The woman that had the bloody iſſue, though ſhee uſed many meanes, and haply *prayers* among the reſt, and all in vaine, yet none tooke effect, that in the end ſhee might come to *Chriſt*, and have both body and ſoule healed at once.

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§.4. There may be a tranſmutation of the thing denied, into ſome other bleſſing that is better of the ſame kind.

3. Obſerve if there be not a *tranſmutation* and a *tranſlation* or turning of the thing deſired into ſome other greater bleſſing of the ſame kinde: for

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God (*all whose wayes are mercy and truth to His people*) doth improve, husband, and lay out the precious stocks of their prayers, to the best advantage, in things, whereby the greatest returns and gains may accrue: as old *Iacob* laid not his Hand of blessing as *Ioseph* would have guided them, but laid the right hand upon the yonger Sonne, whom *Ioseph* did set at his left: So often doth God take off his hand of blessing from the thing wee *prayed* for, and layes and discovers it in another more for our good: and as God giving *Isaac* the power and priviledge to blesse a sonne, though

Isaac

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Isaac hee intended it for *Esau*, yet God unbeknown to him transmitted it to *Iacob*, yet so, as the blessing was not lost : Thus is it in our *prayers* for blessings both upon our selves and others. There is often a *transmutation*, never a *frustration* of them : which may as truely and directly be called an answer to the *prayer*; As if a Factor beyond Sea, when the owner sends for such and such commodities, supposing them more vendible and advantagious, but the Factor knowing the state of things, and the prices, sends him over in stead of them, such as shall sell better,

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and bring in more profit, may be ſaid to anſwer his letters, and that better, than if hee had ſent thoſe very commodities he writ for; Thus *Abrahams prayers* for *Iſhmael* were turned for *Iſaac*: *Davids* for the Child to *Solomon*.

§. 1. God anſwers to the ground of our prayers.

4. Obſerve if in the end God doth not anſwer thee ſtill according to the *ground* of thy prayer: that is, ſee if that holy end, intention, and affection, which thou hadſt in prayer, be not in the end fully ſatisfied, though not in the thing thou didſt deſire: for God anſwers *Secundum cardinem*, according to the hinge which the prayer turnes upon

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As when a General is ſent out with an Army, by a King or a State, who give him many particular directions, how to order and diſpoſe, and manage the war, although in many particulars that fall out, wherein they could not foreſee to give ſo punctuall and particular directions, he ſwerve from the directions, yet if he keeps to the intent of their Commiſſion, and doth what is moſt advantagious for their ends, he may bee ſaid to keepe to his Commiſſion. For as they ſay of the Law, *Mens legis eſt lex, the mind of the Law is the Law*, not the bare words it is printed in: ſo

Chap. 9. the *Meaning of the Spirit* is the prayer, *Rom.* 8. 27. and not ſimply the things deſired, wherein wee expreſſe thoſe our deſires: and ſtill the meaning, the intent, the ground of our prayers ſhall be anſwered. To open this, the maine ends, and meanings of our hearts in our requeſts are Gods glory, the Churches good, and our owne particular comfort and happineſſe: we can deſire but comfort, and a man looketh out, and ſpieth out ſuch a particular mercie, which hee thinketh tends much to Gods glory, and his happineſſe, and yet that thing is denyed; yet notwithſtanding God

God will anſwer him according to the meaning of his prayers, his glory ſhall certainely be advanced, even for that prayer of his, ſome other way, and his comfort made up, which is the common deſire of all mankinde: and thou canſt have but comfort, let the thing bee what it will that conveighs it to thee; and God will take order that that comfort thy ſoule deſired, thou ſhalt have come in one way or other, which when it doth, thou canſt not but ſay thy prayers are heard. For as God fulfils his promiſes, ſo hee heares prayers, there is the ſame reaſon of both: Chap. 9.

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now God hath promiſed, *Hee that leaves Father and Mother, ſhall have an hundred fold:* not *in ſpecie*, as we ſay, *in kinde*, this cannot alwayes be fulfilled, for an hundred Fathers hee cannot have. God fulfills it not therefore alwayes in the ſame kinde, but in ſome other things, which ſhall bee more than a hundred Fathers would bee.

Moſes hee *prayes* hee might goe into *Canaan*, God anſwers the ground of his *prayer*, though not in the matter in it expreſſed and deſired, and that both for *Moſes* his comfort and his owne glory; for hee takes him up to heaven,

heaven, the true *Canaan*, whereof that *Canaan* was but a type, and hee appoints *Ioshua* a fresh and a young man, comming on in the world, and one whom *Moses* himselfe had tutored and brought up, and was his pupill, servant and attendant, *Num.* 6. 11, 28. and this was more for Gods glory, for *Ioshua* was therein to bee the type of Christ leading us to heaven, which the Law (of which *Moses* was the type) could not bring us unto by *reason of the weaknesse* of it; and he being young did it better: and it was not so much also for Gods glory, that one man should doe all;

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and whereas *Moſes* deſired to have the honour of it; in that his ſervant that attended him, and had been brought up by him, and had all from him, that hee was the man ſhould doe it, was well-nigh as great an honour to *Moſes*, as if hee had beene the leader himſelfe. And ſo *David* when hee deſired to build the Temple and an houſe to God, for the like reaſons God denyed it, but yet honoured him to prepare the materialls, and to draw the patterne, as alſo in that his Son did it, who was therein alſo the like type of Chriſt, being a *Prince of peace*, but *David* a man of blood and warre,

and

and likewiſe God accepted this of *David*, as if he had built it, and will recompence him as much.

§. 6. God when he denies, yet ſometimes yeelds far in it, to give ſatisfaction to his child.

5. Obſerve, if in the thing which thou haſt prayed much about, though it be denyed thee, yet if God doth not endeavour to give thee (as I may ſo ſpeake) all ſatisfaction that may be, even as if hee were tender of denying thee; and therefore doth much in it for thy prayers ſake, though the concluſion proves otherwiſe, as being againſt ſome other purpoſe of his, for ſome other ends: as when hee denyed *Moſes* to goe into the Land of *Canaan*, he did it with much

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much reſpect (as I may ſo ſpeak with reverence) to *Moſes*: he yeelded as far as might bee, for he let him leade them, till he ſhould come to the very borders; and hee let him ſee that good Land, carrying him up to an hill, and (as it is thought) by a miracle inabled his ſight to view the whole Land; and the man he choſe to performe this worke, was his ſervant, which was a great honour to *Moſes*; that one brought up by him ſhould ſucceed him. So when *Abraham* prayed for *Iſhmael*, *Oh let Iſhmael live in thy ſight*, *Gen.* 17. 18. God went as far in granting his requeſt as might be;

be; for, ſayes hee, ver. 20. *I have heard thee, & I have bleſſed him, and I will make him fruitfull, and multiply him exceedingly, and hee ſhall beget twelve Princes; but my covenant I will eſtabliſh with Iſaac,* So likewiſe, when in caſting that thing, thou didſt ſeeke at his hands, he ſhews an extraordinary hand in turning it; it is a ſigne he had a reſpect to thee, that hee would vouchſafe to diſcover his hand ſo much in it; let the thing fall which way it will, if Gods hand appeare much in it, thou mayeſt comfortably conclude, that there is ſome great thing in it, and that prayer wrought that miracle

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racle in it, to disposse it so; and that there is some great reason why he denies thee, and a great respect had to thy prayers, in that he is pleased to discover so extraordinary a providence about it.

§. 7. Observe the effects that denyals have upon the heart. As first, if a man doth acknowledge God righteous in it, &c.

Lastly, looke into the effect of that deniall upon thine owne heart; as,

1. If thy heart be inlarged to acknowledge God, to bee holy and righteous in his dealings with thee, and thine owne unworthinesse the cause of his denying thee. Thus wee often finde the Saints expressing themselves in their prayers: that *Psalme* 22. though typically made of Christ; yet as it was penned

ned by *David*, and as it may concerne his perſon, it may ſerve for an inſtance for this, *I cry in the day time, but thou heareſt not*: this might have made him jealous of God; but ſayes he, *Thou art holy, &c.* and dealeſt now with mee in an holy manner, and art juſt in it: *Others have called on thee*, and have been heard, though I now for my unworthineſſe am denied: *But I am a worme.* It might have put a man off, when he ſhould think, others are heard, but not I, but it puts not him off, but humbles him, *I am a worme, &c.* And *Thou art holy.*

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2. If God fill thy heart with

2. If God fil the heart with holy contenment in the denial.

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with an holy contentment in the denyall; if hee ſpeak to thy heart, as he did to *Moſes*, when hee denyed him, *Deut.* 3. *Let it ſuffice thee*; if as to S. *Paul*, when hee was ſo earneſt about removing that buffeting, if thou getteſt but ſuch an anſwer as that to him, *My grace is ſufficient*; or that ſome ſuch like conſideration is dropt in that ſtayes thee: It was the effect of *Davids* ſeven dayes faſting, that he did ſo contentedly beare the loſſe of the Childe, which his ſervants thought would have overwhelmed him, 2 *Sam.* 12.19,20,21. But a conſideration was dropt in which was the fruit of his prayer,

prayer, *That he ſhould goe to him, not hee returne hither*; and his minde was comforted thereby, in ſo much, as it is ſaid, *ver.* 24. *That he comforted Bathſheba alſo.*

Thirdly, if the heart be thankfull out of faith, when denyed.

3. If thou canſt bee thankefull to God, out of faith, that God hath caſt and ordered all for the beſt, though hee hath denyed thee; and although thou ſeeſt no reaſon, but that the thing prayed for, would have beene for the beſt, yet art thankfull upon the denyall of it, out of faith reſting in Gods judgement in it: as *David*, in all thoſe foremention ed places was, *Thou art holy, that inhabiteſt the praiſes*

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praiſes of Iſrael; he praiſes God for all this: *David* before hee did eate, after his ſeven daies faſting for the childe, aroſe, *And went firſt into the Temple and worſhipped*, 2 *Sam.* 12. 20. and of what kinde of worſhip it was, appeares by his anointing himſelfe and *changing his rayment*, which was in token of rejoycing and thankſgiving, and it fell out to him according to his faith, for preſently after, *Solomon* was begotten, *verſe* 24.

§. 4. If the heart be not diſcouraged, for continuing ſtil to pray for other things.

4. If thou canſt pray ſtill and giveſt not over, although thou ſtandeſt for mercies which thou miſſeſt; if when thou haſt

mercies

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mercies granted, thou feareſt moſt, and when denied loveſt moſt, and art not diſcouraged, thy prayers are heard, *Pſal.* 80.4. Though God ſeemed angry with their prayers, yet they pray, and expoſtulate with him, and give not over, for they made that Pſalme as a Prayer, *And how long wilt thou be angry againſt the prayer of thy people?* So Pſal. 44.17. *Though we are caſt among Dragons, yet wee have not beene falſe in thy Covenant.* So ſay thou, I will pray ſtill, though I never have an anſwer in this life. It moves ingenuous natures to ſee men take repulſes and denyals well, which proud

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proud persons will not doe: and so it moves God.

CHAP. X.

Application: *A reproofe of those that pray, but looke not after the returne of their prayers: The causes of this neglect.*

A reproofe of those that pray, but looke not after the return of their prayers.

THe Use of all is, to reprove those, who put up prayers, and are earnest in begging, but looke not after them when they have done, no more than if they had not prayed: who still venture, and have a great stocke of prayers going,

going, but looke not after the returnes that are made, caſt not up their commings in, and gainings by prayers; and when they have prayed, ſit down diſcouraged, as not making account in earneſt, that ever they ſhall heare of their prayers againe, even as if they had been but as words caſt away: *as beating the ayre*; *as bread caſt upon the waters*, which they thinke ſinkes, or is carried away, and they ſhall finde it no more: but herein you deſpiſe Gods Ordinance, and *erre*, *not knowing the power of prayers*; and yee contemne the Lord. But you will ſay as they in the Prophet ſaid, *Where-* Cap. 10.

in

Cap. 10. *in doe wee contemne him?* if you askt a man a queſtion, and when you had done, did turne your back upon him, as ſcoffing *Pilate* askt in ſcorne of Chriſt, *What is truth?* but would not ſtay for an anſwer, did you not contemne him? as not to anſwer when a queſtion is asked you, is contempt, ſo not to regard the anſwer made, when you have beene earneſt in begging, is no leſſe contempt alſo: if you had writ letters to a very friend about important buſineſſe, and had earneſtly ſollicited him for an anſwer, and hee were carefull in due time to ſend one, if you ſhould make

make account to heare of him no more, ſhould you not wrong him in your thoughts? Or if hee did write, if you ſhould not vouchſafe to reade over his anſwer, were it not a contempt of him? ſo is it here, when you have been earneſt with God for bleſſings, and regard not the anſwer: and becauſe verily this is a fault among us, I will therefore endeavour to diſcover to you the cauſes and diſcouragements, which though they keepe you not from praying, yet from this earneſt expectation, and reall, and true making account to heare of anſwers of your prayers; onely my ſcope is, not to

The cauſes of this neglect, are of two ſorts.

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to ſhew you ſo much the reaſons, why God denies you many requeſts, as why even in your owne hearts you are diſcouraged after you have prayed, as if they would not bee anſwered, although God doth anſwer them. Theſe diſcouragements are partly *temptations*, partly *ſinfull impediments* wherein wee are more faulty.

1 Temptations, want of aſſurãce; as 1. That becauſe your perſons are not accepted, your prayers are not.

1. Becauſe your aſſurance that your perſons are accepted, is weake, therefore your confidence that your prayers are heard, is weake alſo: For as God doth firſt accept the perſon, and then our prayers: ſo the beleefe, that

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that God doth accept our perſons is that which alſo upholds our hearts in confidence that our prayers ſhall be granted: this you may finde in 1 *Iohn* 5. 13, 14, 15. in the 13. *verſ.* he ſayes, *Theſe things have I written to you, that ye may know you have eternall life:* and upon that aſſurance this will follow, *Verſe* 14, 15. *And this is the confidence that wee have in him, that if we aske any thing according to his will, he heares us, &c. And if we know he heares us, we know we have the petitions wee deſired of him.* Marke how he links theſe three together, as effects and conſequences each of other. 1. *Theſe*

Cap. 10. *things I write unto you, that you may be assured*, that life and heaven is yours, as in 12. and 13. *verses*. And upon that 2. this confidence will follow in your hearts, *That God heares you*, that is, that you have his eares open to you, and his heart enlarged towards you: and then 3. if you be assured that God heares you, then from this will follow an assurance, that *You shall have any thing granted*, you desire; yea, and hee makes this one of the maine and immediate effects of Assurance of justification; therefore he sayes, *This is the confidence* that we have in him; that is, this effect there is of this confidence,

for

for whereas they might ſay, what benefit will accrue to us by this aſſurance? why this ſayes he, which is one of the great and maine priviledges of a Chriſtian, even aſſurance that God will heare him; and not onely ſo, but grant him all his prayers. For when a man is aſſured God hath given him his Son, he will then eaſily be induced to beleeve and expect, *How ſhall he not with him give mee all things? Rom.* 8.32. If once he looks upon God as a Father, hee will then eaſily conceive that which Chriſt ſayes, *If Fathers that are evill can give good things to their Children, how much more* Cap. 10.

Cap. 10. *ſhall not your Father give his Spirit, and all good things to them that aske them?* and if he gave his Sonne, when wee did not pray to him; how much more ſhall hee not with him give us all things we pray for? if a man comes to ſue to any man whoſe mind he knew not, whether hee loved him or not, he would have ſmall hope or expectation of having his ſuite granted, though hee came againe and againe; but if he be aſſured he is in favour with him, according to that degree of favour hee ſuppoſeth himſelf to ſtand in with him, hee is aſſured and confident of obtaining his requeſt.

2. Diſ-

2. Diſcouragement is the weakneſſe of their prayers: though a man thinks his perſon is accepted, yet alas ſayes he, my prayers are ſo poore and weake, as ſurely God will never regard them. To remove which, let mee firſt aske thee this queſtion: Doeſt thou pray with all thy might? then though *that thy might* be weak in it ſelfe, and in thine owne apprehenſion ſuch, yet becauſe it is all the might which thou haſt, and which grace hath in thee, it ſhall be accepted. *For God accepts according to what a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.* 2 *Cor.* 8. 12.

Cap. 10. 2 Of the weakneſſe of our prairers: which is anſwered by 3. things. 1.

Cap. 10. 2. 2. Thou art to consider that God doth not heare thee for thy prayers sake, though not without them, but *for his Names sake*, and his *Sons sake*, and becauſe thou art his child, as the mother when her child cryes (ſuppoſe it be a weake childe) doth not neglect to heare and relieve it, but tenders it; not becauſe it doth cry more lowd, but becauſe it cries; and pities it the more the weaker it is.

3. 3. Againe, though the performance in it ſelfe be weake, yet conſidered as a prayer, it may be ſtrong, becauſe a weake prayer may ſet the ſtrong God a worke; as faith for the act

of

of it, as produced by us may be weak, yet becauſe its object is Chriſt, therefore it juſtifies: So it is in prayer, it prevailes, not becauſe of the performance it ſelfe, but becauſe of the name, which it is put up in, even Chriſts name; and therefore as a weake faith juſtifies, ſo a weake prayer prevailes as well as a ſtronger; and both for the like reaſon in both, for faith attributes all to God, and ſo doth prayer; for as faith is meerly a receiving grace, ſo prayer a begging grace. And therefore doſt thou think thy prayers are accepted at all, notwithſtanding their weakneſſe? if Cap. 10.

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that they are accepted, then they muſt be accepted as prayers; now if they be accepted as prayers, then as effectuall motives to prevaile with God to grant the thing you aske; for if hee ſhould not accept them to that end, for which they were ordained, it is as if he accepted them not at all. As therefore when he approves of any mans faith as true and ſincere, hee approves and accepts of it to that purpoſe, for which it was ordained, which is to ſave and juſtifie, and to this end doth as fully accept the weakeſt act of faith, as the ſtrongeſt; ſo is it with their prayers, which being

being ordained as a means to obtaine mercies from him, if hee accepts them at all, it is with relation to the accompliſhment of them, which is their end. Cap. 10.

4. Men are miſtaken in judging of the weakneſſe of their prayers, they judge of the weakneſſe of their prayers by their expreſſions, and gifts in performing them, or by the ſtirring and overflow of affections, whereas the ſtrength and vigor of prayer ſhould bee eſtimated from the faith, the ſincerity, the obedience, the deſires expreſt in it. As it is not the lowdneſſe of a Preachers voice, but the

Cap. 10. weight and holineſſe of the matter, and ſpirit of the Preacher, that moves a wiſe, and an intelligent hearer: ſo not gifts, but graces in prayers are they that move the Lord. The ſtrength of prayer lies not in words, but in that it is fitted to prevaile with God; one prayer is not more ſtrong than another, further than it is ſo framed as it hath power with God more or leſſe; as of *Iacob* it is ſaid, *He had power with God, Hoſ.* 12. Now prayers move God, not as an Oratour moves his hearers, but as a childe moves his father: two words of a childe humbled, and crying at his fathers

thers feet, will prevaile more than penned orations. *Rom.* 8. It is *the meaning of the Spirit*, that God looks unto, more than the expreſſions: for the *groans* there are ſaid to be *unutterable*. *Hezekiahs* expreſſions were ſo rude and broken, that he ſayes, *Eſay* 38.14. that he did but *chatter*, (hee being then ſick,) even *as a crane*, yet God heard them. Cap. 10.

A third diſcouragement is failings of anſwers; I have prayed often and long, and I have beene ſeldome or never anſwered, and therefore I make little account of my prayers, that they are heard: others have the revenewes of

3. So often failings of anſwers: anſwered by foure things.

Cap. 10. of their prayers comming in, but I doe misse whatsoever almost I stand for: Therefore say they as those, *Why have we fasted, and thou regardest it not? Esay* 58. 3.

1. To remove this, consider, 1. that thou hast the more reason to wait, for thou hast the more answers to come: for as wicked men *treasure up wrath*, so doe godly men mercy, and especially by their praiers; and therefore mercies, and answers doe often come thick together, even as afflictions also doe.

2. Suppose thou shouldst have few answers concerning the things thou seekest for here, either in praying

praying for thy ſelfe or others, yet *thy reward is with the Lord.* It is in praying as in preaching, a man may preach faithfully many a yeere, and yet not convert a ſoule, and yet a man is not to give over waiting, but to obſerve after every Sermon what good is done, and whether God will give men repentance, as it is, 2 *Tim.* 2.25. And if none be converted, yet as *Eſay* 49.4. *A mans reward is with the Lord. Every man ſhall receive his owne reward according to his own labour*, 1 *Cor.* 3. 8. and not according to the ſucceſſe of his labour onely. So it is in praying, though thou miſſeſt a- Cap. 10.

gaine

Cap. 10. gain and again, and nothing ſucceeds thou prayeſt for, yet be not diſcouraged, for thy reward is with the Lord, which will come in one day.

3. 3. GOD doth it, not that hee heares thee not, but to try thee: for a man to ſay as *David* ſayes, *Pſal.* 116. 1, 2. *God hath heard my prayer, therefore I will call upon him as long as I live*, that is nothing ſo much as to be able to ſay, Well, I have prayed thus long, and for theſe many things, and never ſped, and *yet I will call upon him whilſt I live*, though I find no anſwer in this life. To finde commings in, in a trade, and yet to hold out trading

trading ſtill, argues not ſo much faithfulneſſe in a mans calling, as when a man hath loſſes and caſtings behind hand, and yet to follow it. Cap. 10.

4. God uſually ſtayes ſo long that we have done expecting, *Luke* 18. 8. *The Elect cry day and night*, but *God ſtayes ſo long, ver.* 7. that when he comes *hee findes not faith*, they have done expecting, have forgot their prayers, and then *he doth things, they looked not for.* 4. Eſay 64.

Other diſcouragements there are wherein we our ſelves are more faulty, and which are our ſinnes, more than our temptations, which yet weaken the expecta- §. 2. A 2. cauſe, are ſinfull diſcouragements, which are three.

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1. Slothfulneſſe in prayer.

pectation of having our prayers anſwered: as,

1. Slothfulneſſe in prayer, when wee doe not put to all our might in praying, and then no wonder, we doe not onely not obtaine, but that our owne hearts miſgive us, that we look for little ſucceſſe and iſſue of ſuch prayers, *Qui frigidè rogat, docet negare*; he that ſhews himſelf cold in a ſuite, teaches him he ſues to, to deny him; if wee ſee one ſeeking to us faintly, and ſlightly, wee are not then ſollicitous to deny him, but thinke he will bee eaſily put off, and not thinke much; ſo accordingly when wee ſhall obſerve ſo much by our ſelves,

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ſelves, and ſee our ſelves ſlothfull in praying, and praying *as if we prayed not*, no wonder if by reaſon of that conſciouſneſſe, wee looke not after the ſucceſſe of ſuch prayers, which in the performance wee ſlighted; when wee pray, as if wee were willing to be denyed, wee knowing that the Scripture ſayes, that *the fervent prayer* onely *prevailes*, that prayer which is ἐνεργουμένη, that ſets all the faculties on worke, *Iames* 5. 16. How ſhould wee then expect that God ſhould grant any good thing to us? For though God ſels nothing to us for our prayers, but gives freely, yet

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yet hee would have his gifts accepted: now without large desires, and longings they would not bee accepted: and what is fervent prayer, but the expression of such fervent desires? *Iacob wrestled* when hee obtained: *many seeke to enter*, sayes Christ, *but you must strive*. Now when wee know these things, and yet are slothfull, how can wee expect any answers at all? will not the consciousnesse of it quell all our expectations? and hence it comes to passe that God proportioning his dealings with us to our prayers, because we seeme to pray, and yet pray not to purpose, there-

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therefore God hee ſometimes ſeemes like one aſleepe, and then ſometimes to wake, and make faire offers to helpe, and yet falls as it were aſleepe againe, becauſe we were thus drowſie in our prayers; thoſe prayers that awaken God, muſt awaken us: Thoſe prayers that ſtir God, muſt firſt *ſtirre us to lay hold on God*, as *Iſaiah* ſpeakes: as obedience ſtrengthens *faith* and aſſurance, ſo fervency in prayer begets confidence of being heard. In all other things ſlothfulneſſe doth diſcourage and weaken expectation: doth any man expect that riches ſhould come upon him, when

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when hee doth his buſineſſe negligently? *for it is the diligent hand that maketh rich*: doth any man expect a crop and a harveſt, if he takes not paines to plow, and ſow his corn? no more if you doe not take pains with your hearts in Prayer, can you expect an anſwer, or indeed will you.

2 Diſcouragement: looking at prayer as a duty, rather than as a meanes to obtaine bleſſings.

2. Cauſe: or ſinfull diſcouragement herein: is looking at *prayer* onely as a duty to be performed, and ſo performing it as a taske, and not ſo much out of deſires ſtirred up after the things to be obtained, nor out of faith that we ſhall obtain them; which is as if a Phyſitian having

having a ſick ſervant, to whom he preſcribeth, and commandeth to take ſome phyſicke to cure him, and his man ſhould take it indeed becauſe it is commanded and preſcribed by his maſter, looking at it as an act of duty as he obeyes him in other buſineſſes, but not as looking at it as a medicine, or meanes, that will have any worke upon him to cure him, and therefore orders himſelfe as if hee had taken no ſuch thing. Thus doe moſt in the world *pray* to God, take *prayer* as a *preſcription* onely, but not as a *meanes*: they come to God daily, but as to a *Maſter* onely in this

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this performance, not as to a *Father*, and thus doing, no wonder if they looke for little effect of *prayers*: for our expectation never exceedes or reaches further than our end and intention, which we had in any businesse. If I perform any Ordinance, but as a duty, then I rest therein, and expect no further: as if a man preacheth for *filthy lucre* onely, he performes his duty, and then lookes for his hire, but lookes not after any other effect of his Sermons: so nor will men doe after their *prayers* for answers to them when they performe them as duties onely. Now to help

help you in this, you are to looke to two things in *prayer*. First, to a *command from God*. Secondly, to the *promise of God*: and so to consider it in a double relation, first as a *duty*, in respect to the *command*, secondly as a *meanes* to obtaine or procure blessings at Gods hand in relation to his *promise*: therefore in *prayer*, first *an act of obedience*, secondly an act of *faith* is to bee exercised, *aske in faith nothing wavering, Iam.* 1. Now the most in the world performe it as an act of obedience onely, and so rest in the present performance and acceptation of it, but if a man *pray* in *faith*, hee will

pray

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A directiō. 2. Things to be lookt at in praying. A command. A promise.

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pray with an eye to the promiſes; and looke on *prayer* as a meanes for time to come to obtaine ſuch or ſuch a mercy at Gods hands; and if ſo, then he is not ſatisfied till hee hath an anſwer of his *prayers*, and till then will waite, as the *Church* ſayes, *Shee would wait till he did ariſe and plead her cauſe.*

3. Diſcouragement; falling into ſinnes again after praying.

A third ſinfull diſcouragement is returning to ſinnes after *prayers*, when a man hath prayed for ſome mercy, and riſeth full of much confidence that his *prayers* are heard, and ſo a while hee walkes, yet falling into a ſinne, *that* ſin doth daſh all his hopes, undoes his *prayers* (as he thinkes)

NOT TO BE REPRODUCED WITHOUT SPECIFIC PERMISSION

thinkes) and calls them backe againe, meets as it were with the answer, which is Gods messenger, and causeth it to returne to heaven againe. How often when God had even granted a petition, and the Decree was a comming forth, and the grant newly written, and the seale a setting to it, but an act of Treason comming betweene, stops it in the seale, and deferres it, blots and blurreth all, both prayer and grant when newly written, and leaves a guilt in the minde, which quells our hopes, and then wee looke no more after our *prayers*; and this especially if when wee Cap. 10.

Cap. 10.

were a ſinning, ſuch a thought came in, (as often it doth to reſtraine us) are you not in dependance upon God for ſuch a mercy, and have prayed for it, and are faire for it, how then dare you doe this, and ſin againſt him? when in this caſe the heart goes on, this blots all the *prayer*, and diſcourageth a man; for ſaith the conſcience, will God hear *ſinners?* (as he ſaid.) And thus farre it is true that *ſinning* thus betweene, interrupts and hinders the obtaining our petitions, that anſwerably as wee doe thus daſh and betray and undoe our *prayers*, ſo in a proportion, we finde

The anſwer to it.

in

Cap. 10.

in the way to our obtaining the thing wee *prayed* for, ſo many rubbes and difficulties doe ariſe; for as wee lay blocks in Gods way comming towards us to doe us good, ſo hee in ours: therefore often when a buſineſſe goes proſperouſly on, and wee thinke wee ſhall carry it, comes ſome accident betweene the cup and the lip, that caſts all behinde hand againe, becauſe anſwerably wee dealt with God. For when wee had *prayed*, and were encouraged and in good hopes, then by ſome *ſinne* or other wee ſpoiled all, and bereaved our ſelves of our expectation. But yet this

Cap. 10. you are to consider, that as in the end *praying* useth to overcome *sinne* in Gods Children, so also God in the end overcomes difficulties, and brings the matter to passe: and know it is not *sinnes* past so much that hinder the prayers of Gods people, as the present unfitnesse and indisposition of their hearts for mercy.

TIDINGS

TIDINGS OF PEACE TO BEE SPOKEN to Consciences distressed.

Psal. 85. vers. 8.

——God will speake peace unto his people, and to his Saints, &c.——

THE maine thing intended to bee insisted upon out of these words is dispatcht, yet that I may not leave so faire and fruitfull a crop still standing upon the ground unreaped, I will goe on more briefly to have in the rest of that harvest

the Text affords.

This *Pſalm* (as was ſaid) was penned as a Prophecy of and *prayer* for the returne of Gods people out of the Captivity of *Babylon*, and the ſetling and eſtabliſhment of that Church and State upon its former Baſis, yet ſo as therein there is a further and more eſpeciall aime had to the peace and glory to bee brought in by Chriſt, till when this Prophecy otherwiſe had but a poore and ſlender accompliſhment, in regard of much outward glory or peace that that Church enjoyed.

And therefore the peace here ſpoken of and promiſed

promiſed for the preſent is to be extended largelier than to outward proſperity, or an happy iſſue out of that calamity, even to ſpeaking peace to drooping and weather-beaten conſciences: and accordingly wee finde this kinde of peace to have beene ſpecially promiſed by the Prophet *Iſaiah* to the people at their returne out of the Captivity, both in *Iſaiah* 48. from 20. to the end, and *Iſaiah* the 57. from the 14. to the end, there being many broken hearts that had wanted the light of Gods countenance long, having beene during the Captivity, baniſht from the Ordinan-

ces of the Temple, hanging up their *harps* mourning, whose *thoughts* were as if God had meant to *destroy them*, as appeares *Ier.29.11.* who afterwards were refreshed with inward *peace*, at the restauration of those Ordinances, as well as with outward, as by those places doth appeare. Therefore in relation to this kinde of peace onely I will at this time handle the words.

In the words you have a discovery of Gods proceedings in treating of peace, or proclaiming war with his people and subjects.

Obser.1 1. You see *that sometimes*

times God doth not ſpeake peace to his owne children. This was their ſtate for the preſent, when this *Pſalme* was penned: *Hee will ſpeake peace,* therefore at preſent he did not; yea, it may incline us to thinke that God at preſent ſpake the contrary, for the Prophet ſpeakes this by *faith*, as contrary to ſenſe, and preſent experience; hee beleeves God intends to come againe to a treaty of peace, though now hee ſeemes to have nothing but anger, and blood, and war in his lookes, ſpeeches, and actions; and to threaten and proclaime warre, and take up Armes againſt them. And thus God often

ten deales with his owne Children, whether a people or a particular man: ſo with a nation, *Eſay* 63. 10. *They rebelled, and he fought againſt them*: ſo with a particular man, God frowned upon and rated his Childe *Ephraim, and ſpake bitter things againſt him,* (it is the phraſe uſed, *Ier.* 31. 20.) though yet *Ephraim is my pleaſant Child,* ſayes he: *David* had not a good word from him a long time, *Pſal.* 51. 8. *Make me to heare againe of joy and gladneſſe.* And *Pſal.* 50. 7. *Heare oh my people, and I will ſpeake*, but not againſt them they might hope, becauſe hee ownes them for his people:

ple: *Heare oh Iſrael, and I will teſtifie againſt thee:* and yet it followes, *I am the Lord thy God. Iob* ſayes, he did not ſpeake onely againſt him, but alſo *wrote bitter things*, hee wrote as it were bookes againſt him, *Iob* 13. 26. hee writing over in his Conſcience *the ſinnes of his youth* in letters of blood, and wrath, and terrors for them.

There muſt needs bee ſome great reaſon for this, *they being his people*, which is the ſecond thing that is intimated, and may be obſerved out of theſe words, namely, the reaſon or moving cauſe provoking God thus to interrupt *Obſer.* 2.

rupt the peace of his people: they had fallen into ſome groſſe *folly* or other, ſome ſinfull inordinate diſpoſitions had beene indulged unto, and nouriſhed in them, which is uſually, though not alwayes, the cauſe of this his dealing: this is evident by this, that the concluſion of their peace, when it is made up againe, hath this clauſe, as the onely article of reconciliation between them, that *they returne no more to folly*, implying they had formerly runne out into ſome inordinacy, which to reduce them from, God had tooke up armes againſt them, and thereby taught them wiſe-

dome

dome to take heed of loſing, and then buying peace at ſo deare a rate againe. And indeed all the quarrells, that God hath againſt a Nation, a particular place, or perſon, that belongs to him, doe begin there; *They rebelled*, and Hee *fought againſt them*, *Eſay* 63.8. *For the iniquity of his covetouſneſſe I was wroth*, *Iſai.* 57.

Reaſon.

The reaſon is, for anger is out of love as well as hatred, which therefore he expreſſeth though with griefe, hee ſhould bee put to quarrell with thoſe, hee hath ſet himſelfe to love. And as wicked men, whom hee alwayes hates, may out of his patience have

have a truce; ſo on the contrary, with his owne, God may take up a quarrell, yet He loves them, and remembers them with everlaſting kindneſſe.

The *Vſes* of both are theſe.

Vſe 1. 1. As peace with God is deare to you, ſo to take heed of turning unto folly. Onely take this advertiſement, that they are not meere follies or ignorances that doe interrupt or breake the peace: as it is not ſimply the outrage of ſome Pirats that will cauſe two States at peace to enter into a warre, unleſſe that State conſent to their act, and maintaine them in their rapine. So it is

is not ſimply the riſing of luſts that *warre in our members againſt the law of the minde*, that breake the peace betweene God and us, unleſſe they be approved of, and conſented unto, nouriſhed and maintained with ſome preſumption; whileſt wee maintaine, and take up a conſtant fight againſt Gods enemies in us, and diſavow the outragious riſings of our luſts, the peace may hold, and often doth; for whilſt wee are not at peace with ſinne, God may be at peace with us and our ſpirits; but ſo much peace as wee give them, ſo much war God takes up.

The

Vſe 2. The ſecond *Vſe* is: Doth God take up quarrells againſt His owne? then upon any breach made, goe forth to meet Him: It is Saint *Pauls* exhortation, not *to let the Sunne goe downe upon thy wrath*, but to reconcile thy ſelfe ere night, with thy offended brother; but I turne the exhortation, *Let not the Sunne goe downe upon Gods wrath* towards thee; but every day make and renew thy peace with God, ere thou ſleepeſt, that as *David* ſayes, *thou mayeſt lie downe and ſleepe in peace*, *Pſal.* 4. 8.

Vſe 3. The third *Vſe*: If the peace of Gods owne people bee thus often interrupted

rupted, who yet are *the Sons of peace, Luke* 10. what wrath is reserved for the *children of disobedience*, and open Rebells? that are *children of wrath*, because *of disobedience. There is no peace to the wicked, sayes my God*, Esay 57. God is *a preparing against thee*, who ever thou art, that goest on in *sinne*, *if thou turne not*, Psal. 7. 13. thou art prest for hell, and art thither bound, to encounter with the wrath of the great God, thither where no truce is to bee had, *there is no discharge in that warre*, as *Solomon* sayes, *Eccles.* 8. 8. Thinke of this, you that *sinne*, and will *sinne*; whose peace is not struck

Ephes. 2. 2.

ſtruck up betweene God and you, who never yet ſo much as entred into any treaty of peace with God, who never apprehended God and your ſelves at oddes.

Obſer.3 The third thing to bee obſerved out of the Text is this; *That when the Child of God wants peace, he can have no peace till God ſpeake it*; God muſt ſpeak peace, if ever his people have it: therefore ſayes hee here, *I will heare what God will ſpeake*: he ſpeaks in oppoſition to the voice of man, and the helpe of ſecond cauſes, and of all meanes whatever, which in time of diſtreſſe, of themſelves can doe no good.

Rea-

Reaſon firſt: Becauſe *God* is the *King of all* the world, the Soveraigne Lord of all. Now treaties of warre and peace are the prerogative of Kings, and of them alone: they may conſult with their ſubjects about eſtabliſhing good Lawes, as they uſe to doe, &c. but the proclaiming Warre and Peace with forreigne States, they have ever held in their owne hands; and ſo doth God who is the King of Kings. *Reaſ.* 1.

Secondly, becauſe God is the Judge of all the world and the party offended, at whoſe ſuite all arreſts and controverſies doe come; now when a con- *Reaſ.* 2.

condemned man ſtands at the barre, let all the ſtanders by ſay what they will, bid him bee of good comfort, and tell him that his cauſe will goe well, yet till hee heare the Judge himſelfe ſpeake as much, he cannot bee at reſt in his minde: the Judge onely can acquit him and abſolve him. The King alone ſpeakes pardons; and ſo doth God peace; all afflictions are his arreſts; thou muſt therefore make thy peace with him, if thou wilt be at peace.

Reaſ. 3. Thirdly, peace eſpecially of conſcience, is a thing muſt bee *created*, for our hearts of themſelves are full of nothing but turmoile;

moile; as the *raging Sea*, which *cannot reſt. I create the fruits of the lips, peace, Iſaiah* 57. 19. men may ſpeake it, but I muſt create it; A word of power, ſuch as went forth when light was created, muſt goe forth from God, or elſe there is no peace; for otherwiſe our hearts are as the ſea, that reſts not.

Fourthly, the wounds of conſcience which are in Gods people, are of that quality, that none but God can cure them; for, the chiefe thing that wounds them, is the loſſe of *Gods* favour, not ſimply his wrath: for it is the glory of God, and his favour, *Reaſ.* 4.

vour, not ſelfe-love onely that makes them ſeeke him; therefore nothing gives peace, but the reſtoring of his favour, and the light of his countenance; the ſame dart that wounded, muſt heale againe; *Iſay* 57. *I ſmote him, and I will heale him*; And as one that is ſick with love, when love is the diſeaſe, no phyſick, no perſwaſion of friends can cure it, nothing but onely the love of the party beloved; ſo when a ſoule is wounded for the loſſe of Gods love, not all the things in the world can cure the heart, but one word from him, one good looke, one promiſe from him that wee

are

are his, ſtils all, and onely can give peace. Like to a poore child, that cryes for its mother, let who will dandle it, and play with it, and uſe it never ſo kindly, yet it will not bee ſtilled till the mother comes; ſo it is with a poore ſoule that cryes after God day and night.

1. *Vſe.* In caſe thou art in diſtreſſe, eſpecially of ſpirit, and want of peace of Conſcience, waite upon God, in the uſe of meanes for peace; friends may come to thee, and ſay, Why ſhouldeſt thou be troubled? thou haſt no ſuch cauſe to bee caſt downe; but all theſe are *miſerable comforters*, (as *Iob* *Vſe* 1.

Iob ſaid) unleſſe God ſpeak peace: *David* heard by the Prophet *Nathan* that his ſinne was pardoned, but yet his ſoule was not at quiet, till God would ſecond it immediately by his Spirit; therefore ſaies he, when *Nathan* had been with him, *Pſal.* 51. 8. *Make mee to heare of joy and gladneſſe.* Art thou baited with helliſh blaſphemies caſt into thy ſoule? God muſt ſpeake peace, and rebuke Satan for thee, and take him off thee; all thy friends, all the men in the world cannot doe it; they can onely ſay as the Archangel ſaid, *The Lord rebuke thee.* And hee can as eaſily doe it, as hee did rebuke

buke *Laban*, and forbade him ſpeaking roughly to *Iacob*, the ſame charge he can give in an inſtant to Satan: therefore wait upon God, and looke up to him.

2 Conſider this againſt the time you come to die; all your deſire is to die in peace, and, *Oh let thy ſervant depart in peace!* is the ſpeech and deſire of all; But who is it, that muſt ſpeake peace to you then? God onely. At death you will ſend for a good Miniſter, or a good friend, to give you ſome comfort, (as you call it) but, if God will not ſpeake it, how can they? If you could call all the Angells out of

Vſe 2.

Heaven, and all the Saints both in Earth, and Heaven; and ſo could have all that whole Colledge of Phyſicians about you, and they ſhould deſire to comfort you with all their cordials; yet if God will not ſpeake it, who is able to doe it? *Iob* 34.29. *If he hides his face, who can behold him?* None can ſhew his face, as the oppoſition in the next words ſhewes. Falſe daubers may come to you, and ſay, *Peace, peace,* as they in the Prophet ſaid; but liſten what God will ſpeake, he onely muſt, and can doe it; and be ſure you make ſure of him before you come to die. Would any wiſe Prince deferre

deferre the treaty of peace with his enemy, till hee come into the field, and when the battell is begun? how fooliſh then are thoſe, who neglect ſeeking after GOD, till the aſſault of death comes, and the *King of feares* with all his terrours, hath encompaſſed them round?

4. *Obſervation* is, that let Gods people bee in never ſo great diſtreſſe, yet *it is an eaſie thing for God to give peace* to them; marke the expreſſion uſed here, It is but *ſpeaking peace*, that is, it is as *eaſie* for him to give peace, as it is for you to *ſpeake a word*; it is no more to him: Then, our comfort is, that as he one- *Obſer.* 4

ly muſt doe it; ſo he eaſily can doe it, even with a word.

Reaſ. 1. *Reaſon* 1. Becauſe his ſpeaking is *creating*: if he ſpeaks, he makes things to bee, even with a word; as at firſt, he did but ſay, *Let there be light, and there was light*; ſo ſtill, if he but ſay, *Let there be peace*, there *is peace*: *he made all, and upholds all by the word of his power*. As therefore when the ſtorme was at its height, and the waves moſt raging, yet at one word of *Chriſts*, they were all ſtill: *The Sea and the winds obey him*: ſo when tentations are moſt fierce, and the doubts of thine owne heart moſt tumultuous,

tuous, and raging, a word from him, can ſtill them.

Secondly, becauſe the light, which God gives to a mans ſpirit, when hee ſpeakes peace, is a ſure and infallible light, and therefore a ſatisfying light; ſo as when it comes, it muſt needs give peace; and no objection, no tentation can darken or obſcure it, when it ſhines: *If he give quietneſſe, who can trouble?* ſayes he in *Iob* 34.29. No creature is able to ſeparate from his love, or the aſſurance of it. *Reaſ.* 2.

1 It is a certaine and infallible light, which God gives, when hee ſpeakes peace; The *anointing from above*, which enlighteneth

a mans eyes, *is truth, and is no lie*, 1 *Ioh.*2.27. that is, in *teaching a man* (of which he there ſpeakes, not onely what hee is in himſelfe, but what hee is in teaching us) hee doth it ſo, as a man is not deluded by it, and therefore it is added, *None elſe need teach* him; for did the Spirit (when he did ſpeak peace) ſpeak ſo, as that that man to whom it is ſpoken, did not infallibly apprehend it, hee ſhould ſpeake in vaine: for ſo the Apoſtle reaſons in caſe of *unknown tongues*, that if a *Trumpet* give *an uncertaine ſound*; or a man ſpeakes ſo, as it ſhall not bee knowne what he ſpeakes, *hee beats the aire:*

aire: 1 *Cor.*14 9. Now therefore ſurely GOD, when hee ſpeakes peace, ſpeakes it ſo infallibly, and diſtinctly, that the ſoule knowes the meaning of it; It is not a voice elſe; for, ſayes the Apoſtle there, *ver.* 10. The *end of all voyces is to ſignifie*, and therefore if I *know not the meaning of the voice, hee ſhall bee as a Barbarian, that ſpeakes to me*: *ver.* 11. eſpecially when the ſpeaker undertakes to bee a *witneſſe*, as the Holy Ghoſt in ſpeaking peace is, 1 *Iohn* 5.6. Now to *witneſſe*, is ſuch a teſtimony, as is taken for infallible, for the end of it is to put an *end to the controverſie*, and it

ends the ſtrife betweene man and man; now the Holy Ghoſt when hee ſpeakes, ſpeakes as a *witneſſe*, and therefore puts an end to a mans doubts: he ſpeakes infallibly.

And therefore in the ſecond place, it is a ſatiſfying light alſo; it is ſuch a light, as diſpells darkneſſe, as anſwers all objections; and ſo ſpeakes peace home. As in a queſtion, and Controverſie in Divinity, or Logicke, when ſome one bottome truth is underſtood, a man hath a light, which goes through all the Objections, and anſwers them all; ſuch a light doth the Spirit give to a poore diſtreſſed

ſtreſſed ſoule, about the great controverſie of his owne ſalvation, when hee doth ſpeake peace; hee gives ſuch a light, as ſatiſfies the minde, as lets him ſee that in Gods free grace, and in Chriſt, which doth anſwer to all, hee, or all the devils can ſay againſt him, from what wants, or objections are in himſelfe. *Hee openeth*, and *no man*, nor devill, *is able to ſhut*: And therefore when hee doth ſpeake peace, his teſtimony is taken and beleeved: If wee *receive the witneſſe of men*, and reſt in it: 1 *Iohn* 5.9. *The witneſſe of God is greater*, that is, of more power, and efficacy to per-

ſwade, and ſatisfie the ſoule.

Vſe 1. 1. *Vſe*, is an Vſe of comfort to poore ſoules, that are in diſtreſſe, and in ſuch diſtreſſe ſometime, as they thinke, and ſay their caſe is deſperate, and paſt recovery, ſo farre are their ſoules ſometimes ſhot into deſpaire. Conſider, how eaſie it is for you to have your condition altered, and changed, even in a moment. I tell thee, though (it may bee) thou haſt been caſt downe this twenty yeeres, and thy ſoule is battered, broken, hardened, ſetled, fixed in ſerious thoughts of thy ruine, and reprobation, yet one good looke, one

one good word from God ſhall in an inſtant diſpell all, alter thy conceit and apprehenſion cleane; God can and doth often more with one word, in one moment, than Satan could doe in many yeeres, with all the objections he could muſter up. The truth of this, in experience wee often finde and obſerve in our ſelves and others. Yea, and ſometimes when hee doth ſpeake peace, hee gives ſuch ſatisfaction to a mans ſoule in that particular, that he would bee content to bee as many yeeres more, in his ſpirituall conflicts, to enjoy but the like light, one halfe houre. Thus eaſie

is

is it, for God to ſpeake peace. Though thou thinkeſt thy ſelfe never ſo *farre off from peace*, yet hee can ſpeake peace to them, that *are afarre off, as well as thoſe who are neere*, as himſelfe ſayes, *Iſaiah* 57.19. for, ſayes he, it is *I* that ſpeake it. And when hee doth it, then all thy doubts and diſtreſſes, will bee forgotten, as the paines of a woman in travaile are when a Man-childe is borne.

Vſe 2. Secondly, is the Church in any diſtreſſe? (as the Church here at this time was) hee can redeeme it out of all with a word. A word ſpoken to *Cyrus* his his heart, did ſet them in

their

their owne land againe, ſo you have it expreſſed, *Eſay* 44. 26, 27, 28. *The God that ſaith to Ieruſalem, thou ſhalt bee inhabited, and to the Cities of Iudah, yee ſhall bee built*; you ſee his maner of doing it, it is but with a word ſpeaking; *hee ſayes to Ieruſalem, be built*; and though there be never ſo great impedimẽts in the way, he will *ſay to the deep, bee drie*, that his people may paſſe over; hee dryed up a whole Nation, a ſea of people, namely the *Babylonians*, to make way for this deliverance. And when they are conquered, and *Cyrus*, a new King comes to have the ſway of things, God ſpeakes to his

his heart alſo; *That ſaith of Cyrus; he is my ſhepheard*, and cauſeth him to ſay to Jeruſalem, Be thou built. Therefore goe to him, and truſt in him in all the diſtreſſes of the Church, as the Church alſo did, *Pſalm.* 44. 4. *Thou art my King, command deliverances*; A *Mandamus* from God doth it, and will doe it at any time.

Obſer. 5 Let God bee never ſo angry, and his peoples diſtreſſe never ſo great, *yet he will ſpeake peace in the end* to his people: you heard before, that if wee have peace, he onely muſt give it; and then, that hee could, and was able with eaſe to doe it: and now you

you ſhall heare, that hee will certainely doe it in the end.

The *Reaſons* the Text ſuggeſts are theſe:

1. If wee conſider but, who this God is, that is to ſpeake peace, *I will heare what GOD the Lord will ſpeake*; hee is *the Lord*, and therefore able to ſpeak what pleaſeth him; hee is peculiarly *the God of peace*, and therefore willing to ſpeake peace. Now, 1. when it is ſaid, hee is the *God of peace, and the God of comfort*, the meaning is, hee is full of it, infinitely full of it, and out *of the abundance of the heart, the mouth ſpeakes*; thoughts of peace, and love to his, doe

Reaſ. 1.

doe boile within him, as hatred, or malice doth in a malicious man towards his enemy; ſo as hee cannot containe and forbeare expreſſing it towards him; that as *David* ſayes, his *thoughts did burne within him*, and at laſt, *brake forth*; ſo in God, *I know the thoughts I thinke towards you* (ſayes hee to them of the captivity) *Ier.* 29. 11. *They are thoughts of peace, and not of evill.* And 2. beſides that theſe his thoughts of peace are taken up of himſelfe, his Sonne alſo hath beſpoken peace for us; and therefore God will ſpeake it. Even as *Ioſeph*, though he ſpake roughly a while to his

his brethren, yet could not in the end containe, *Gen.*45.1. ſo nor God.

Secondly, Let us conſider, who they are to whom hee is to ſpeake it, they *are his people*, as the Text hath it; and to them there is no queſtion, but hee will ſpeake peace; though hee ſeemes angry for a while. They are his people, that is the reaſon given 1 *Sam.*12.22. *Hee will not caſt off his people*: as alſo *Eſay* 63. 8,9. *When they rebelled, hee was wroth, yet hee ſaid, Surely, they are my people, ſo I was their Saviour. They?* why they are the *ſonnes of peace*, *Luke* 10. 6. ordained for peace, and therefore ſhall bee

Reaſ. 2.

bee ſure to have it; and although ſome differences may ariſe betwixt God and them, yet there is a naturall στοργὴ in the Lord, that moves him to ſpeake peace in the end to them: as the dumbe ſonne of *Cræſus*, when hee ſaw his father like to bee killed, though hee had never ſpake before, yet then out of an *impetus* of ſpirit, the ſtrings of his tongue were unlooſed, and hee cried out to the murtherer, *Kill not King Cræſus*; ſo, when the enemies of his Church are ready to devour his people, and *Satan* is ready to ſwallow his child up in deſpaire, then Gods bowells worke within him,

him, and hee can hold no longer, but cries, *Save my child, ſave my Church. Is Ephraim my pleaſant child,* (ſayes God) *Ier.* 31.20 ? Well ſayes *God*, *though I ſpake againſt him*, and took him up, and chid him ſoundly, *yet I cannot forget* my child ſayes he, nor my Fatherly affection to *him*, *but my bowels are ſtirred, and I will ſurely have mercy on him.*

Thirdly, otherwiſe if God did not in the end ſpeake peace, they would indeed *returne to follie*, which is the third thing in the text. For his end of ſpeaking peace, is that they might not returne to folly. *Pſal.* 125.3. *The rod* *Reaſ.* 3.

of

of the wicked ſhall not alwayes lie upon the righteous, leſt they put forth their hand to iniquity. Therefore at the laſt verſe, *Peace ſhall bee upon Iſrael.* As for this cauſe hee ſpeakes outward peace, ſo alſo inward, and ſuffers not the rod of Satan, and of his owne heavie diſpleaſure to lie upon their hearts: for elſe they would returne to the pleaſures of ſinne; for every creature muſt have ſome delight; their ſpirits would faile, and bee tired out elſe, and wearied in good duties, if GOD ſhould not in the end ſpeake peace, *Eſay* 57. *The ſpirit would faile before me.* When the childe ſwounds

ſwounds in the whipping, God lets fall the rod, and falls a kiſſing it, to fetch life into it againe. As tis a rule in Phyſicke, ſtill to maintaine nature: and therefore when that ſhall bee in hazzard to bee deſtroyed, they leave giving purging Phyſicke, and give cordialls: ſo doth GOD with his people; though with purging Phyſicke, hee often brings their ſpirits very weake, and low, yet hee will uphold and maintaine their ſpirits, ſo as they ſhall not faile, and bee extinguiſht, but then hee will give cordialls to raiſe them up againe.

Vſe 3. What good heart that

that beares a child-like affection to God, would offend such a God, that bee thy distresses what they will bee, will certainely speake peace: then doe not put him to it, spend not upon that precious stock of his free grace and love. Tis true, *hee is married to thee*, and therefore *though thou hast gone a whoring after many lovers, Ier.* 3. 1, 2, 14. still hee sayes, *Returne*, for *I am maried to thee*: as therefore when man and wife are fallen out, they consider, wee must live together, and therefore they reconcile themselves againe: so consider, it must be betweene GOD and thee, and make

make it a meanes and motive to recover thee, as *Samuel* did to the Iſraelites: 1 *Sam.* 12. 22. *You have committed this great ſinne, yet turne not aſide from following the Lord, for God will not caſt you off, you are his people.* Goe home to him againe, hee will ſpeake peace. Thinke thus, the time will come wherein God will bee friends again with mee, he and I cannot bee ſtrange long; though I would, hee will not, *Eſay* 57. 18, 19. though he went on ſtubbornly, yet God healed him, and would not loſe his childe, therefore I will returne of my ſelfe.

THE

THE FOLLY OF RELAPSING after Peace ſpoken.

Pſal. 85. ver. 8.

——*But let them turne no more to folly.*

THE ſixth Obſervation is, That *Peace being ſpoken to* their hearts by GOD, *they ſhould returne no more to folly.* See this *Ezra* 9. 13, 14. *Thou having puniſht us leſſe than wee deſerve,* O and *Obſer. 6.*

and given us such a deliverance as this, should wee againe breake thy Commandements, wouldst thou not be angry with us till thou hadst consumed us?

Reas. 1. 1. Reason: Because it will be a greater aggravation in *sinnnig*; It is made the aggravation of *Solomons sinne*, 1 *Kings* 11, 9. *That God had appeared to him twice*: they were especiall appearances and manifestations of mercie; and though such doe now cease, yet wee reade of such as are analogicall to them, as *Iohn* 14. 21. Christ promiseth to manifest himselfe, which is by shedding abroad his love, and his Fathers love into

into the heart, which is evident by the former words, *he shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him*; and after he saith, *wee will come to him, and make our abode with him, ver.* 23. *and* 27. *My peace I will give unto you.* Now such appearances will be set upon the score of every *sinne*, many yeares after, as they were upon *Solomons*. And the reason is, because nothing wounds an ingenuous loving Nature more, than matter of unkindnesse: *If it had beene my enemy*, sayes *David*, *I could have borne it*, *Psal.* 55. 12, 14. *but it was thou oh man, mine acquaintance, we tooke sweet counsell together*, a bosome

friend to whom I had committed my ſecrets, opened my heart: Thus when GOD hath unboſomed himſelfe as it were to a man, and told him what was in his heart towards him, this goes nigh him, if hee lifts up the heele againſt him. And the reaſon of that further alſo is, ' becauſe of all things elſe, a man cannot endure to have his love abuſed, you come nigh him when you doe ſo, for his love is himſelfe, and commands all in him, ſo that abuſe his love, and you ſtrike at his heart; it is leſſe to abuſe any excellency in a man, to reproach and extenuate his parts,

parts, learning, &c. though these are deare to him, but his love is his bowels. And therefore, when God hath opened his heart to a man, and set his love upon him, and revealed it to him, and hee carries himselfe unworthily, *it paines him at the heart.* Besides, 2 it is against the law of Nature and of Nations, to seeke out for a peace, and get it concluded; and then secretly to prepare for, and enter into a war; nothing more hatefull, or can exasperate two Nations one against another more than this. It was the aggravation of *Absaloms sin*, that being newly reconciled with his father,

and taken into favour againe, after two yeeres discountenance, hee then beganne to rebell more closely.

Reas. 2. 2 Reason is intimated in the word *folly*, as if the Lord should have said, Set aside the unkindnesse and wrong you doe to me, yet therein you besoole your selves; you will have the worst of it. And indeed, when God doth afterwards draw nigh to a man againe, upon that his recovery of his peace, it appeares to be folly, even in that mans owne apprehension; when hee hath tasted how sweet God is, then come and aske him, What, will ye returne to

sin

ſinne againe? he will then ſay, Aske mee if I will wound or cut my fleſh: It is impoſſible, thinkes hee, I ſhould any more be ſo beſotted; if there were no other motives, hee thinkes it the greateſt folly in the world. And therefore GOD on purpoſe chooſeth out that expreſſion, and placeth it here in this caſe, becauſe it is indeed the greateſt folly in Gods ſight; and is ſo apprehended by our ſelves, looking upon *ſinne* after peace is ſpoken to us. It is folly to *ſin* againſt God at any time, but eſpecially then; and that will appeare by theſe particulars.

1. Becauſe, before a man had that peace, hee felt the bitterneſſe of ſinne, for GOD never ſpeakes peace, till that bee felt: now that is an argument even to ſenſe, never to returne to it againe; which a foole will be warned by; *A burnt Childe dreads the fire*; even as a Child will take heed being taught by ſenſe. When a man ſhall be in great diſtreſſe, and his Conſcience ſhall ſuggeſt to him, as *Ier.* 4. 18. *Thy wayes and thy doings have procured theſe things to thee, this is thy wickednes:* a ſpeech like that when you ſay to your Children, when they have gotten any harme or cold, or ſickneſſe,

neſſe, this is *your playing* and gadding and going in the Snow, and your eating of fruit, &c. ſo doth GOD ſpeake there to them when they were in diſtreſſe, this *is your wickedneſſe, for it is bitter, it reacheth to the heart*, it woundeth the Conſcience, the wounding of which, of all elſe is the greateſt miſery. When once a man after this, hath peace reſtored to him, and hee comes newly out of ſuch a diſtreſſe, aske him then how he likes turning to ſuch a *ſin* againe, and he will tell you, it is the greateſt folly in the world: Aske *David* if hee will murther any more after

his bones have beene broken, and set againe.

2. Thou wilt easily acknowledge, it is folly to return to *sin* again, if thou considerest the termes, upon which thou didst obtaine thy peace. Reckon what paines it cost thee, to wash out the guilt and staine which sinne had made, what vowes and resolutions thou madest, what bonds thou didst seale unto, what promises never to returne, what prayers and teares, what rappes and knocks at Heaven Gates, ere thou couldest get an answer, or God to speake one word, hee making as if hee had not beene within: why is it

it not folly now to loſe that in an inſtant, thou haſt beene a getting ſo long, haply many yeares, and with ſo much paines and coſt? You uſe it as an excuſe to prodigalls to ſay, things lightly come by, are lightly gone; and yet you count them, and call them fooles for it, as not knowing what it is to earne a penny: how much more folly is it, when a man having afore morgaged his peace, and God reſtored it againe after much ſuite, and waiting many a terme, then to come home, and venture to caſt all away at one throw at dice? ſuch a foole art thou, when thou returneſt to ſinne; to drinke

drinke that at one draught, which thou haſt been getting many a yeere, what madneſſe is it? when thou haſt taken much paines, to waſh thy ſelfe, then to wallow in the mire againe, and make thy ſelfe new worke, what folly is it? who but Children and fooles will doe thus? That which the Church ſaid in another caſe, may well bee alluded to in this, *Cant.* 5.31. *I have waſhed my feet, how ſhall I defile them?*

3. Conſider, what it is thou doſt hazard to loſe by returning to folly: *thy peace. David* loſt it, as appeares *Pſal.* 51. 12. therefore ſayes he, *reſtore to mee the*

the joy of thy ſalvation; In loſing of which, thou wilt bee ſo much a loſer, that if the *ſinne* thou chooſeſt, were able to give thee all the world, it could not recompence thee; no not the loſſe of one houres communion with GOD, which in a moment will bring thee in more ſweetneſſe, than all thy ſins can doe to eternity. If all the pleaſures of ſin were contracted, and the quinteſſence of them ſtrained into one cup, they would not afford ſo much, as one drop of true peace with God doth, being let fall into the heart. *It is peace which paſſeth underſtanding*. Few pleaſures here do exceed

exceed the ſenſes, nay, the ſenſes are capable of more than the things can give; but this paſſeth underſtanding. *Gods loving kindneſſe is better than life.* If it were propounded to thee, thou muſt loſe thy life next moment, if thou ſhouldſt commit ſuch a ſinne, wouldeſt thou venture, if thou didſt beleeve it? Now *the loving kindneſſe of God is better than life*, and wilt thou loſe the enjoying of it, though but for a moment?

4. It is folly to returne againe, becauſe the pleaſures of ſin will bee much leſſe to thee after thou haſt had peace ſpoken. Take them at the beſt, when

when they are freſheſt, and when thy palate was moſt in reliſh, and taſte with them, when thou wert carnall, and ere thou kneweſt what ſweetneſſe was in God, and they then were but poore ſorry pleaſures: but now, they will prove farre more empty than before; they are empty vaine pleaſures even to him that hath them in their flower, and in his ſeaſon of ſinning; and therefore all wicked men are weary, and do inwardly complaine of their condition, onely they cannot finde ſweetneſſe in God, and ſo are faine to keepe themſelves to their husks; but alas, to thee they are farre

farre leſſe worth than to another man, who knowes not God, and therefore thou art like to have a worſe bargaine of it; another man can make more money of a ſinne, and get more pleaſure out of it, than thou art able to doe.

For firſt, thy conſcience having beene ſcortched with ſinne, as ſcalt fleſh deares more, and is more ſenſible in comming to the fire, than other parts of the body, is become of a quicker ſenſe; whereas wicked mens is ſeared, and ſo they commit all *uncleanneſſe with greedineſſe*; but thine is tender and galled in the act, which allayes

allayes much of the pleasure of thy sinne, and mingleth the more bitternesse with it.

And 2. besides this galling of conscience, which is common to thee with many an unregenerate man, thou hast a principle of grace, an inner man, which is dead to such pleasures, that tastes them not, that is like *Barzillai*, who through age 2 *Sam.* 19.35. could not taste either what hee ate or drank, as young men doe; no more can that *New man* in thee: and therefore it can be but halfe as pleasant to thee as to another man. If one side of a man bee taken all with a numbe Palsie, what

what pleasure is it to that man, to exercise his limbs in the actions of life? Hee is but halfe a man, and lives but halfe a life; so it is with thee, when thou hast grace in thy heart, but halfe thy heart can take pleasure in sinning, that new man the other halfe, reluctates, grieves for it, hates what thou dost; and all this must needs strike off much of the pleasure.

But 3. If wee adde to this, that this new man in him having once tasted what sweetnesse is in God, and *How good the Lord is*, is then like a man that hath eaten sweet-meats, other things are out of taste

taſte with him, and therefore alſo it is folly to returne. *No man* (ſayes Chriſt, *Luke 5. ult.*) *having dranke olde Wine deſireth new, for hee ſaith the old is better*; a man uſed to high fare, cannot agree ſo well with thinne diet: ſo the ſoule having beene uſed to taſte of great pleaſures in God, the impreſſion and remembrance of them leaves his ſoule leſſe ſatisfied than another mans; a ſtomacke that hath beene enlarged to full diet, looks for it, and riſeth more hungry from a ſlender meale: now communion with God inlarges the faculties, and widens them, and makes them more capable

pable of greater joyes, than other men have, and therefore the creature is lesse able to fill them; still he remembers with much griefe, whilest he is eating his huskes, what fare hee had in his Fathers house: and oh, *Then it was better with me, than now.* Call me not *Naomi*, but call mee *Marah*, as shee said, *For I went out full, and am come home empty*; so doth hee say, when hee comes from the act of sinning, he went with his heart full of peace, and meeting with a bargaine of sinning, thought to eke out his joy, and make it fuller, but hee comes home empty.

1. Use

1 Uſe, is to thoſe who have had peace ſpoken to them, let them at ſuch times feare themſelves and God moſt, for then comes in this, as you ſee here, as the moſt ſeaſonable admonition that can bee given, to returne no more to folly. 1. Feare God then moſt; for of all times elſe, then ſinnes provoke him moſt; to come and call him *Father*, and *the guide of your mouth*, and yet to fall to ſinne, this is *to doe as evill as you can*, you cannot doe worſe. *Ier.*3 4,5. So *Ezra* 9. *After ſuch an eſcaping, ſhould we againe breake thy Commandements, wouldeſt thou not bee angry till thou hadſt conſumed*

Vſe 1.

ſumed us? In times of af-
fliction it is the property
of a good childe to love
GOD moſt: in times of
ſpeaking peace, to *feare*
God moſt and his *goodneſſe*,
and to feare to offend him
for his goodneſſe ſake.
Did I onely ſay, that God
is *provoked* moſt then, if
you returne to folly? Nay,
I adde further, hee *is grie-*
ved, which is more than
to be provoked; and there-
fore you ſhall marke that
expreſſion and admoniti-
on not to *grieve Gods Spi-*
rit, then comes in, when
the *Spirit hath ſealed us*
up to the day of redemption,
*Epheſ.*4.30. Then by ſin-
ning wee are ſaid more
properly to grieve him
than

than before, when hee hath so farre ingaged himselfe to love a man, and expressed himselfe to him, and set his seale upon him for his. God is angry with wicked mens sinnes, but he is grieved for yours. To grieve him is more than to anger him. Meere anger is an affection can ease it selfe by revenge, and by comming even againe with the party, and when wee can or intend to doe so, our mindes are not so much aggrieved, but please themselves rather to thinke of the revenge which wee meane to execute: so when wicked men sinne whom GOD meanes to meet with, hee is

is ſaid to bee angry rather then grieved ; and ſayes, *I will eaſe my ſelfe of mine adverſaries : Eſay* 1.24. *and avenge my ſelfe of mine enemies.* But here, as when a mans wife that lies in his boſome, or his child ſhall wrong him: ſo is it when one ſins, whom God hath ſet himſelfe to love, and done much for, and made knowne his everlaſting kindneſſe unto, and ſealed to the day of redemption: this goes to his heart, grieves him rather then angers him, and ſuch are the trueſt and deepeſt griefes. What ſhould hee doe with you in this caſe? if afflict you, and by that meanes goe about to

turne

turne you from your iniquity, therein he ſhall but afflict himſelfe as it were; for *Though they rebelled, yet when they were afflicted he was afflicted, Eſay 63.9,* 10. As when a Father that is a Magiſtrate, or as one that maintaines a Student in a Colledge, if either puniſheth a childe, or pupill in his purſe, hee puniſheth himſelfe, ſo muſt God afflict himſelfe to afflict you. Put not the Lord into theſe ſtraits if you have any love in you. And 2. as thou art therefore to feare God moſt then, ſo thy ſelfe moſt, and to bee more watchfull over thy own heart; thou art then apt to returne to

folly, if thou takeſt not heed; as when a man hath beene very hot, or ſweat much, hee is apt to take the greateſt cold. *Hezekiah*, after GOD ſealed peace to him, and anſwered his prayers, and renewed the leaſe of his life, his heart got cold, hee did returne to folly. The reaſon is, becauſe then the heart is apt to grow leſſe watchfull, and to thinke it ſelfe fortified enough againſt any tentation. As S. *Peter* having ſeene Chriſt tranſfigured in the Mount, grew confident in his own ſtrength. And know that the Devill watcheth ſuch an opportunity moſt, for hee gets a great victory if he

hee can foile thee then, after hee hath beene foiled himselfe, and when thou art most triumphing over him; how many battels have beene lost through security of victory and recoyling of the enemy? and besides, our corrupt nature, so farre as unrenewed, is apt to gather heart to it selfe, to slight sin, as thinking its pardon easily gotten.

Therefore when thou art tempted, labour often to renew those thoughts, which thou hadst of thy sinne at that time, when thou wert suing for peace, before thy peace was gotten; when thou wouldest have given a world for

Gods favour; & also what thoughts thou hadst of it, when God spake peace, how thou didst abhorre it, yea, thy selfe, & look what sin was most bitter to thee and an enemy to thy peace; as if uncleanness, idleness, neglect of prayer, ill company, &c. and preserve in thy heart those bitter apprehensions of it, and say of it, thou hast *bin a bloudy sin to me*, as *Moses* wife said of her husband: and though I have got peace, and my life saved, yet it was a bloody sin to *Christ*, his blood was shed to purchase this my peace, & shall I return to it?

And when tempted to it again, have recourse to the kindness God shewed thee in

in pardoning, and say, how shall I doe this, and sinne against God? say as he said, *Is this thy kindnesse to thy friend?* 2 *Sam.*16.16. and what, shall I *Absolom*-like, now I am new reconciled to my Father, fall a plotting treason againe? what, shall I make more worke for prayer, more worke for God, breake my bones again, and lie roaring again? Thinke thus, I was burnt in the hand afore, I shalbe racked surely now. *Sin no more lest a worse thing befall thee.*

Vse 3. The doctrine of assurance (if not abused) and of Gods speaking peace to men is no dangerous doctrine to make men secure and presumptuous

in sinning : when peace is preached in any mans heart, this use naturally flowes from that Doctrine, *returne no more to folly*. The very scope of the whole Epistle of S. *Iohn* is to help all beleevers to assurance, as appeares by the 1 *Iohn* 1.4, 5. and the 5. *Chap.* 13. *These things I write to you, that yee might have communion with God, and that your joy might be full.* But this will open a way to all licentiousnesse. No sayes S. *Iohn* Chap. 2. 1. *These things I write unto you that you sin not*; nothing guards the heart more against tentations, than the peace of God: it is said to *guard* the heart, *Phil.* 4: 2. Yea and

and if you doe sinne, the assurance of Gods love is the speediest way to recover you; so it followes: *If any one doth sinne, wee have an Advocate with the Father, &c. And hee that hath this hope in him*, that is, to live with Christ, and *knowes what manner of love the Father beares us, purifies himselfe as hee is pure*, 1 *Iohn* 3. 1, 2, 3. If there were no more but selfe-love in a man, it were then no wonder if he doth abuse it. For selfe-love, where the love of God is wanting, is unthankefull and ungratefull', willing to take all the love and kindnesse which is afforded, and abuse it, and worke

upon it for its owne advantage; and it is true also that becauſe wee have too much of this principle unmortified in us, therefore God truſteth ſo few with much aſſurance, becauſe they would abuſe it. But where true love to God is ſeated, and much of it implanted, there the love of God and the peace of God doth as kindly and naturally enkindle and enflame and ſet it a worke, even as arguments ſuitable to ſelfe-love doe worke upon, and ſtirre that principle. For grace is more for GOD than for our ſelves, it being the image of Gods holineſſe, whoſe holineſſe conſiſts in this,

to

to aime at himselfe in all: and therefore when Gods free grace towards a man is revealed, it raiseth him up to higher straines of love to God, and hatred of *sinne*. And therefore it is observable, *Psa.* 51.12. that *David* when hee *prayes for the restoring of the joy of his salvation*, hee *prayes* not simply for it, or alone, but withall *prayes* for a *free spirit*, *Establish me with thy free Spirit*: that is, a spirit of ingenuity, which is kindly, sweetly, and freely wrought upon: therefore when wee have a free spirit wrought in us, then that free love that is in GOD towards us, will worke most kindly upon

it, and constraines us to *love him that loved us first. The love of Christ constrains us*, 2 *Cor* 5.14. *Because wee thus judge, that if Christ dyed for all, then they which live should not live unto thẽselves, but unto him that dyed for them:* S. *Paul* gives the reason, why this love of Christ did thus constraine him, because hee *did thus judge*, that is, this consideration of Christs love, hee having a principle of love in his heart to Christ, hee found to bee a powerfull prevailing reason to perswade him to live to Christ. Having a new judgement hee saw force and strength in the argument. And so shall

we

wee if we thus judge, and it will have this naturall consequence as naturally to follow upon it in our hearts, as any reason in any other kinde hath, that is brought to enforce any other conclusion. And therefore as the minde is *constrained* (as it were) to assent to a truth proved by force of reason, that if you grant this, then this or that will follow: so because we judge this reasonable by an argument drawne out of *loves Topicks, that if Christ dyed for all, who otherwise must themselves have dyed, that then they should live to him,* this will *constraine* us to love him, and live to him.

Amor

Amor Dei est extaticus, nec se sinit esse sui Iuris.

The case of relapsing into the same sinne after peace spoken, resolved.

THis Text and admonition here gives a just occasion to consider a little of that so often questioned case of Conscience concerning relapses of Gods children into the same *sinnes* and folly againe, and whether after peace spoken, Gods people may returne againe to folly. Some have held, that a man after a second repentance could not fall into the same *sinne* againe: others if hee did, it excluded him from mercy for time to come. For the comfort

comfort of some poore soules, whose case and tentation this may bee, I will speake somewhat though sparingly and with caution.

1. The Scripture no where excludeth those from the state of grace, or barres mercy from those, that have relapsed into the same *sinne*, especially so long as in regard of the manner of their *sinning*, it bee but folly, not wickednesse or wilfull *sinning*; that is, rather proceeding out of errour of understanding, and heat, and impetuousnesse of fooliſh affections, then obstinacy and malice in the will, and with *despite of the Spirit*

rit of grace, Heb. 10. 27.

Yea: 2. In Scripture wee meet with ſuch paſſages and promiſes, as may undoubtedly uphold any ſoule, that hath ſo fallen after peace received, into the ſame *ſinne*, and preſerve him from apprehending himſelfe excluded therefore from mercy and the ſtate of grace: As *Hoſ.* 14. 4. *I will heale their backſlidings, I will love them freely*; unleſſe they had fallen after repenting and former healing, it could not have beene called backſliding, and yet this hee promiſes to heale, and withall ſhews the ground that moved him to it, his loving them freely:

freely: for if in any thing his free love is shewne to any of his children, and drawne out, it is in healing againe such a backsliding soule after recovery and peace given. For the falling into the same *sinne*, which hath beene repented of and healed, provokes GOD more than a thousand other acts of *sinnes* formerly committed, though of the same kind. And therein also to shew his free love, that hee can pardon even the abuse of love it selfe, hee leaves some thus to *sinne* after his love shed abroad in their hearts. Some hee shewes his free love unto, in keeping them from *sinning*,

sinning, others in pardoning them, and giving them repentance: they are but severall wayes of drawing it forth; so that if in any thing, herein his free love is shewne, for if it were not free, it would never endure it sefe to bee abused. And likewise the sure mercies of *David* are then shewne, when God *multiplies to pardon*: so *Esay* 55. 3. having mentioned the promise of the *sure mercies of David*, Hee promises to *multiply to pardon*, as it is in the Originall, *verse* 7. which are thus joyned, both because the sureneſſe of his Covenant, is therein shewne, and because wee might haply multiply

ply to *sinne*; and at least it supposeth the possibility of it againe. God likewise runs upon such a supposition in that expression of his, to his owne people, *Ierem.* 3. 1, 2. They *say, if a man put away his wife, and shee becomes another mans, shall not the Land be greatly polluted? but thou hast played the harlot with many lovers, yet returne againe to mee,* saith the Lord. Hee speakes to her, as to one had beene his Wife, who though shee had not beene put away by him, but had put away her selfe and runne away, not once, but often, and that with many lovers, and sometimes in the midst of her whoredomes,

domes, had come in and made challenge of his former love, and pleaded his former mercy to her, and yet fallen backe againe *verse* 4.5. (where he adds, *Wilt thou not from this time cry, My Father, and thou art the guide of my youth*, that is, I know sayes God, you will come now and cry as heretofore you have done, and say, Oh thou art my Father and my Husband, and confidently still claime an interest in mee upon my former kindnesse, and *yet doe as evill as you can*, for you cannot doe worse then thus to abuse my love) yet for all this at the 12. *verse*, *Returne thou backsliding Israel*, saith the Lord,

Lord, *for I am married to you, ver.* 14. That which hee doth thus to a nation, hee may doe to a particular man who is his child.

Againe, 3. There are not altogether examples wanting for this.

1. Wee finde *Sampſon* a godly man (whom yet wee would ſcarce have thought ſuch but that wee find his name in the liſt of thoſe Worthies, *Heb.* 11.) enſnared with a *Philiſtine* woman, againſt the counſell of his parents, *Iudg.* 14. 3. who clearely laid open his *ſinne* to him, and hee was in the event reproved for his folly, for his wife deceived him, told his *Examp.* 1.

his riddle to his enemies which hee in the end perceived, and further to reprove him, in the issue shee was given away to another, *verse* 16, 17, 20. from all which passages of reproofe, an holy man that had his eyes in his head, could not but see his errour; and yet againe a long while after this, (twenty yeares after, *Iudg.* 15. 20. (when certainely ere that hee had repented of this his *sinne*, for which his parents before, and after, God so clearely did rebuke him,) hee went to Gaza, *Iudg.* 16. *verse* 1. *and saw a harlot, and went in to her*, and there escaped narrowly with his life at midnight,

night. And *verse* 4. After that also it came to passe hee fell in love with another, as bad as any of the former, *Dalilah*, who was his ruine. But his returning thus to folly cost him deare; for in the end hee was taken as a Captive to the *Philistims* his enemies, and that through her false-hood; deprived of his strength hee had spent upon these women; had his eyes, those betraying lights put out, that had ensnared him; and himselfe made a foole of, to make his enemies sport. So as no child of God can take any great encouragement thus to returne to folly, for the future, by his

his example, though comfort they may have therefrom in case they have returned for the time past.

Examp.2. 2. Another example may bee that of *Iehoshaphat* who committed a great *sinne*, in joyning with *Ahab* that wicked King that *sold himselfe to worke wickednesse*, 2 *Chron.* 18.1, 2, 3. and he was foretold what would bee the successe of that confederacy and journey, by *Michaiah*, before hee went with him to battell, and after in the battell it selfe, where hee hardly escaped with his life, and by an extraordinary providence at his *prayer* was delivered, *verse* 31,

31,32. and as if that were not sufficient, God sends another Prophet to him, *Chap.* 19.2. who with open mouth reproves him and discovers to him his *sinne*, *Shouldest thou helpe the ungodly, and love them that hate the Lord? therefore is wrath upon thee from before the Lord:* which message to so good a man doubtlesse was not in vaine, but humbled him for that his sinne, and wrought repentance in him to avert that wrath. And yet after that great and miraculous deliverance of him and his people, *Chap.* 20. wee find him relapsing into the same sin *ver.* 35. *After this did Iehoshaphat joyne himselfe*

selfe with Ahaziah King of Israel, who did very wickedly, and he joyned himself with him to make ships to goe to Tarshish: which another Prophet in like manner reproveth, and likewise God himselfe rebuked by the like ill successe of that league to the former, *the ships were broken, verse* 37.

3. Saint *Peter* a man, who seemed by other of his cariages, bold enough, was yet three severall times surprized with base feare: once when hee tempted Christ, not to hazard himselfe at *Ierusalem*, where Christ had told him that hee was to suffer: *Matth.* 16.21,22,23. *Master*

ſter (ſayes hee) *ſpare thy ſelfe:* upon which ſpeech Chriſt calls him *Satan*, rebuketh him more ſharply, than at any other time, for which ſurely there was a more then ordinary cauſe. Saint *Peter* thought that if his Maſter ſhould ſuffer at Jeruſalem, that himſelfe, and the reſt ſhould not bee ſafe: That ſpeech therefore proceeded from feare, and therefore Chriſt doth immediately thereupon call for ſelfe-deniall, and taking up the Croſſe, *verſe* 24. And this was immediately after peace ſpoken, *verſe* 16, 17, 18. Chriſt had never more comfortably given teſtimony to

Saint *Peter*, and his *faith*, then there. Yet againe, after this, Christ had him up into the Mount, and transfigured himselfe, to hearten him against that triall to come, which made him so confident; yet then hee denied him, at his arraignment: when againe Christ immediatly upon that lookt backe upon him with so sweet a looke as broke his heart for this his folly; and so he returned againe, and it cost him many a teare; and Christ after the Resurrection, owned him againe, more than any of the rest, bad them that first met him, *Goe tell Peter*, Hee mentions him by name, and

and in especiall, *goe tell* him the first newes of it: and then also hee asked him, *Peter, lovest thou me?* and he said, *Lord, thou knowest I love thee:* as if hee had said, Though I have played the wretch, yet *I love thee:* upon this, though he grew more bold, *Acts* 4.13. yet *Gal.* 2.11,12. wee finde him falling into the grudgings of the same disease, which cast him into another fitt, hee *dissembled, fearing them of the Circumcision:* this was a spice of the former sinne, though not so grosse; and though the outward acts in these sinnes were divers in their occasions, yet they were all acts and

buds of the ſame roote of bitterneſſe; and may as well bee called ſins of the ſame kind, as the committing differing acts of uncleanneſſe, are reckoned falling into the ſame ſinne.

In the fourth place, if the Scriptures had beene utterly ſilent in examples, yet reaſon conſonant to other principles, & grounds of Divinity, and of the Scriptures, might perſwade the ſame.

Reaſ. 1. 1. If hee may after the moſt ſerious, and through repentance fall againe, into as grievous a ſinne of another kind, and returne: why not into the ſame againe? I confeſſe there is

is some disparity, which might make him more averse, and set him in some more remoteneſſe, from the same *sinne* he hath particularly repented of, then another; which shall bee considered in its place. Yet, the difference, cannot bee supposed such, as should make the one possible, and not the other: all true repentance working the heart, to an abominating every *sinne*, as well as any; and therefore if it were true, it was for that particular *sinne*, as *sin*; and then it would worke the like against all, and every *sinne*, according to the measure of the *sinfulneſſe*; and though it may,

and doth worke a more keene, and speciall hatred against that particular *sin*, a man hath beene most stung with, yet still, this is but so farre, as this aggravation, (*to fall into the same sinne againe*,) may cause such a relapse, to bee more sinfull than another *sinne*: and so farre, and upon that ground hee is, and may bee more set and strengthened against it, then against another *sinne*. But then, if the supposition fall upon another grosse *sinne*, never before committed, the sole and single act of which, other circumstances make as heynous, even as this reiterated act of a *sinne* formerly

merly committed, can bee, then the one is equally as possible as the other. But however, yet still the difference is but in degrees: namely, in that the heart is elongated a degree, or so, further from that sinne formerly committed, then any other: which will not therefore so vary the case, (as *magis & minus* do not) that it should bee made impossible to fall into the one, and not into the other.

2. *Reason:* If hee may fall into some grosse sinne, which at first conversion, hee did above all other humble himselfe for; and yet, *that* same *initiall repentance*, did not put him *Reas. 2.*

into ſuch an impoſſibility of falling into that ſinne againe: Why then ſhould a renewed act of repentance for the ſame, or for ſome other reiterated ſin, bee ſuppoſed to haye ſuch vertue in it; as to make him ſhot-free for ever, from the ſame fiery dart againe?

Reaſ. 3. Againe thirdly: Let it be conſidered, from whence it ſhould be, that a renewed, or indeed any act of true repentance, though never ſo great, and intenſe, ſhould haye ſuch a tranſcendent, eternall, and invincible vertue in it, and priviledge annexed to it; for how is it, that repentance doth ſtrengthen

then us againſt ſinne, but by reſtoring the decayed frame of Grace, to a better conſtitution and greater degree of ſtrength then before; and by raiſing it, above a mans luſts, and above that luſt, more than all other: as in *David*, when hee prayed, *Create in me a cleane heart*, which, through his *ſinne* ofuncleanneſſe, was in an eſpeciall manner, defiled with a proneneſſe to that ſinne: But yet withall remember, that, *that* new frame of heart, & ſtrength gotten by that renewed repentance, and *that* augmentation, and increaſe of hatred againſt, and abominating that

ſinne wrought by it, is all but a creature; as grace, and every new degree of Grace is: and therefore for preſerving us, hath in it ſelfe but the power, and force of a created habit, which may bee prevailed againſt, by the ſinne that is in us; and can no more, nay much leſſe put us into a ſtate of confirmation againſt any particular ſinne, than the grace of the Angels could of it ſelfe confirme them in a ſtate againſt all ſinne. And as for the impreſſion of that bitterneſſe, which in our repentance for that ſinne fallen into, was made upon our hearts: that alſo can bee ſuppoſed to have but

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the like force upon our ſpirits, *that* the impreſſion of *joy unſpeakable and glorious*, hath upon the heart in thoſe heavenly raptures, which beleevers ſometimes enjoy; yea and the latter of theſe will eaſily bee ſuppoſed to bee of the greater efficacy of the two; and both but creatures: Now thoſe raviſhing joyes, are not yet ſuch immortall and everlaſtingly quickning cordialls, that put ſuch ſpirits into a man, as to preſerve him from ſwounds, and faintings of ſpirit for ever: and though, whilſt they abide and are preſent to the heart, they doe then raiſe it above all things

things here below: yet when a man hath beene a while off from that Mount, and hath conversed a while with things here againe below; then that lustre weares away, as the glory that shined in *Moses* face did: and after a while, the sense and present tast of those joyes weares out; and when that is gone, the bare remembrance of them which is left, hath not in their absence, such an infallible, though a great efficacy to preserve his minde in an everlasting disrelishing former delights; but that hee may, and often doth fall in love againe too too much with them: although

although indeed whileſt the preſent ſenſe of them did abide upon the heart, it abſtracted the minde from all things here below. And hence a man is apt to *fall from his firſt love*, *Rev.* 2. and from that high eſteeme of ſpirituall things; as the *Galathians*, *Gal.* 4. 15. *Where is the bleſſedneſſe you ſpake of*, ſayes Saint *Paul* to them: therefore anſwerably the remembrance of the bitterneſſe of any *ſinne* felt in our deepeſt humiliations, is much leſſe able to preſerve a man, nor is the impreſſion and dint made ſo laſting, nor the ſcarres and wounds of conſcience continuing for ever ſo

ſo freſh, as everlaſtingly to preſerve and deterre us from falling into the ſame *ſinne* againe. For both are but creatures, and at beſt but arguments drawne from ſenſe, and experience within our ſelves, and have but an humane created power, which is not alwayes efficacious; eſpecially ſeeing GOD hath ordained us *to live by faith, more than by ſenſe*, for faith is appointed by God to bee our more conſtant keeper, 1 *Pet.* 1. 5. *We are kept through faith unto ſalvation*, and by it more ſurely and more conſtantly then by impreſſions of joy, or ſorrow, which are made to ſenſe: and yet wee

wee are not kept by it of it ſelfe, but by *the power* of God : ſo then, wee are *kept by the power of God* as the principall ſupporter, and guardian, *through faith* as the inſtrumentall, and by it rather than by ſenſe or any other grace of ſorrow or repentance ; becauſe faith caries the heart out of it ſelfe, and commits it ſelfe wholly into the hands of God *as a faithfull Creator* (who is the ſtrength of Iſrael, to *keepe* a man *from everie evill worke,*) as not being able to ſecure it ſelfe againſt any ſin through the power of any fortification, or ſtrength that any other grace or degree of grace

grace hath built, no not for one moment; and therefore is as dependant upon God after a fall, and a renewed repentance out of it, yea and more than before hee fell, and his owne woefull experience hath reason to make him so. The like instance to illustrate the truth of this wee may draw from the assurance of faith it selfe. For even the assurance of faith it selfe, (which is an act properly belonging to that grace, called therefore *the assurance of faith*, *Heb.* 10. 22.) which doth strengthen us as much against doubting when it is joyned with joy unspeakable and glorious, as repen-

repentance can doe againſt any other *ſinne*: and whileſt it is upon us, in the ſtrength of it a beleever is apt to thinke himſelfe armed and ſtrengthened, and ſo eſtabliſht, as that hee ſhall never queſtion Gods love any more, or the pardon of his *ſinnes*: and yet, experience ſhewes it, that the guilt of ſinne prevailes ſometimes againe, after this, and the ſame doubts ariſe, and prevaile as much as ever; neither will the remembrance of the former aſſurance bee alwayes of force enough to reſiſt them; for hee may come to queſtion that aſſurance it ſelfe alſo; and ſo *for-*

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get that hee was purged from his old sinnes. And if the guilt of sin prevaile in the Conscience againe, against such a renewed and setled act of *faith*, why may not the power of a lust prevaile in the members, after a renewed act of repentance?

Reas. 4. 4. If it bee said, that a renewed act of thorow repentance doth keepe a man, not by any peculiar vertue in it selfe alone, but by the power of God concurrent with it: Then I demand to see the promise wherein God hath infallibly obliged and ingaged his power, upon such a renewed act of repentance, to preserve from falling

falling into that sinne of all other for ever ; without which no man in faith can affirme it ; and without which there is an *it may bee*, and a supposition of such a possibility, as sometime falleth out, and is reduced to existence. GOD indeed hath said, that *if wee fall, hee will put under his hand*, to breake that fall, that it shall not ruine us ; but not so to keep us in his hands, as wee shall bee out of danger of falling againe. A renewed act of repentance is indeed an ordinance sanctified to preserve a man ; yet, but in the same maner that other ordinances are, as Prayer, and the word preacht,

preacht, and admonition, &c. with which GOD doth not alwayes ſo infallibly cooperate, as efficaciouſly to worke alwayes that which they ſerve to.

5. If there were not ſuch a poſſibility, as might and doth ſometimes fall out; than every regenerate man, after ſuch a renewed act of repentance, might ſecure himſelfe againſt the committing that groſſe act againe for ever; but ſo he can never doe againſt any particular act of ſinne, but that ſinne againſt the Holy Ghoſt. Saint *Paul* therefore exhorts, when a brother is fallen into a ſinne,

ſinne, *to reſtore ſuch an one with the ſpirit of meekeneſſe*; upon this conſideration, *conſidering thy ſelfe, leſt thou alſo bee tempted*; and hee layes the exhortation upon thoſe who are moſt *ſpirituall*; *Yee that are ſpirituall, reſtore ſuch an one, conſidering thy ſelfe leſt thou alſo bee tempted, Gal.* 6.1. ſo as hee ſpeakes of ſuch, as have their hearts raiſed up to the beſt frame, through the moſt deepe, and ſerious repentance: and now wee will ſuppoſe one, that hath formerly fallen himſelfe into the ſame ſinne, which another is fallen into, but not yet reſtored, but himſelfe is returned by

by repentance out of it: (for indeed, such a spirituall man, is of all other like to bee the meekest bone-setter of a man fallen,) and even such doth Saint *Paul* exhort to consider, that themselves may for the time to come, bee also or in like maner tempted, that is, fall as this man fell; and therefore *so bee tempted* as to fall into the same sinne againe, that hee was fallen into. And if any man could bee secure from the like fall againe, hee had beene out of the reach of this exhortation to this duty upon that ground mentioned, as not capable of it. But the Holy Ghost hath elsewhere, 1 *Cor.* 10. 13.

13. told us, that there is *no tentation which is common to man,* but is incident to befall any man, at any time; and therefore *verse* 12. *exhorts him that standeth, to take heed leſt he fall:* indeed, that temptation which is *common to Devils with men,* the ſinne of finall deſpaire, and againſt the holy Ghoſt, &c. a regenerate man may through the grace of Chriſt, ſecure himſelfe againſt: but, all ſuch *ſinnes as are common to man,* from theſe or any of them, no man in any ſtate, can without an extraordinary revelation, ſecure himſelfe from the commiſſion of.

Onely I adde theſe Cautions

rit of *holineſſe*, and leſſe compatible with grace, as uncleanneſſe, of which Saint *Paul* ſayes, *God hath not called us to uncleanneſſe*, but to holineſſe, 1 *Theſſ.* 4. 7. it is in an eſpeciall manner there oppoſed to *holineſſe*, and ſuch as theſe are *workes of the fleſh* which are *manifeſt*, even to Nature, to civill men: and therefore when they are often fallen into, they doe manifeſt, that the heart is but fleſh. And although the limits, how ſeldome or how often, cannot bee ſet concerning relapſes into theſe, or any ſinnes; yet, in an ordinary courſe it may bee ſaid, that few *godly* men fall into ſuch

ſinnes

sinnes againe and againe: God keepes them from such in an ordinary providence, that scandals should not arise: they being sinnes which all the world takes notice of. But those other sinnes of rash anger, and love of the world, and spirituall pride, &c. these being lesse manifest, and sitting more close to our spirits, godly men are more subject unto.

Yet secondly: wee must againe distinguish:

1. There are the inward lustings to those outward acts: now, though grace weakneth the very lustings within, yet, takes them not wholly away;

The spirit that is in us, (that is,) in us Saints, sayes S. *Iames*, *lusteth to envy*: and as to envy, so to all other *sinnes*.

And secondly, there are the outward grosse acts of such *sinnes*; and therein the weakenesse of *sin* in a regenerate man, and strength of grace shewes it selfe most in preserving from them: for, as *to will* is *present with me*, saies S. *Paul to will what is good, yet how to performe it I am not able*, *Rom.* 7.18. So on the contrary; to lust the heart may bee ready, and lust may soone rise up in rebellion, but when it should come to the act, there is a weakenesse discovered;

covered; they come to the birth, and want ſtrength often to bring forth; the contrary luſting and prevailing of grace being then ſeene and diſcovering it ſelfe: that it fareth with a regenerate man in this caſe often, as with a man that is deadly wounded, who riſeth up to ſtrike his enemy, and thinkes to runne him thorow, but ſinkes down againe, *medio conatu*, when his ſword is at his enemies breaſts, through a deficiency of ſpirits; or as a man in a Palſie, or the Gout, who thinks hee is able to walke, till he comes to try, and then hee finds a weakeneſſe which makes him

fall backe againe : Thus, even when the whole forces of luſts are muſtred up, yet the weapons fall out of their hands. Humours in a healthfull conſtitution, may ſtirre, and boake in the ſtomacke, when yet they come not up, nor prevaile unto vomiting. In that place aforenamed, *Gal.*5. the Apoſtle ſeemes not to deny but that in the moſt regenerate, luſtings may ariſe, for *the fleſh* (ſayes he) *luſteth againſt the ſpirit, ver.* 17. but yet, as for outward acts, he tels them, *verſe* 16. *That if they walke in the ſpirit*, that is, in the prevalency of the ſpirit, keepeing up a holy frame of heart

heart above the flesh, that then *yee shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh:* for that frame of heart so kept up, will hinder the outward fulfilling of the lust; which is never done till flesh and corruption is actually raised above the spirit, and gets more voices to carry it, till the spirit bee under hatches, and the flesh above, and so steeres the helme: otherwise the lusting of the spirit against the flesh, will hinder the outward doing, and fulfilling of a lust. For the reason hee gives, *vers.* 17. *So as you cannot doe what you would*, implies, that not onely lustings, which arise without consent, may bee

in such a man, but further, much of the will may bee wonne to consent to them, to like them; when yet there is not strength enough to carry it on to the outward act; *you cannot doe what you would.* And what those workes of the flesh are, which are manifest workes of the flesh, and which Christians whilest they walke in the Spirit fulfill not, he mentions and reckons up in the following words. And this is the more ordinary frame of a Christians heart; for *ver.* 24. (sayes hee) *they that are Christs have crucified the affections and lusts*, that is, so farre, as not to fulfill them.

3. He

3. He may more easily fall into a grosse *sinne* of another kinde, than into the same after speciall repentance for it, and peace spoken in the pardon of it. Because true repentance especially fortifies the heart against that *sinne* which a man hath most repented him of; and sincerity lies more in watching over that *sinne* than any other: so sayes *David*, *Psal.* 18. *I was upright, and kept my selfe from mine iniquity*, that especiall *sinne* which was eminently his *sinne*. A mans arme that hath beene broke, will, if well set, rather breake in some other place than where it was broke at the

first. Hence sometimes it falls out, that that which was a godly mans bosome sinne before conversion, continues not to bee so after: but, another steps up in the roome of it; by reason that hee then endeavoureth to wash out that great staine, most; and spendeth the most of the Fullers sope, to purge himselfe from it; and so becomes, ever after, most watchfull over it; and sets in this his weakest place, the strongest garrison, and a watch, to prevent the enemy. And as an act of some presumptuous *sinne*, though it inclines the heart more to all *sinne*, then before, yet, especially,

ly, to commit that kinde of *sinne* againe, rather then any other: soon the contrary, it is in a sound and solemne repentance, for some especiall sinne; and in the endeavouring, to mortifie some especiall member of the body of *sinne*: (to mortifie which, not onely in the bulke and generall, but also particularly and apart in the severall members of it, the *Holy Ghost* exhorts, *Colos.* 3.5.) though thereby, the whole habit of the body of *sinne* is purged and weakened, yet that partilar *sinne* which wee aime especially to have mortified, is through Gods blessing more subdued then

any

any other. We see Idolatry, was the *sinne* which the people of Israel relapsed into, againe and againe; yet when they were once throughly humbled by the Captivity for it, they never returned to it, of all *sinnes* else, not to this day: so as it may bee said, as was foretold, haply in another case, *Ezek.* 16. 43. *Thou shalt not commit this lewdnesse of all thy abominations: Ionah*, though he would haply never runne away from God againe, after his Gaole delivery out of the *Whales* belly; yet, immediately after peace spoken to his heart he falls into a sinne of another

ther kinde; into a passion of extream anger and peevishnesse, and quarrelling against God. And the reason of this especiall tenderneſſe to fall into the same sinne, is, because the Conscience lookes upon a relapse into that sinne, to bee more hainous, than into any other sinne of another kinde; because of that aggravation of it, which thereby would staine and die it: and although a sinne of another kinde shewes the variety of corruption more; yet, this is more against the power and worke of repentance it selfe, which was particularly exercised about that sinne: and also

alſo breaks, and diſſolveth all bands of a mans vowes, covenants, prayers, &c. made againſt it in particular, and ſo is made more grievous. And this wee may ſee in *Ezraes* humbling himſelfe for that great ſinne of the people, in joyning themſelves in marriage with the people of the Land, when hee did ſet himſelfe to humble himſelfe for them, together with thoſe *that feared God*, *Chap.* 9. 4. What an hideous apprehenſion of the hainouſneſſe of that ſinne, if they ſhould againe fall into it, did that dayes repentance raiſe his heart up unto? as appeares *v.* 14. *Should we againe breake thy*

com

commandements, and joyn in affinity with them, wouldst thou not destroy us, till thou hadst consumed us, and *till there was no escaping?* Into which sinne, yet, the people did againe fall, after they had repented of it, with a solemne confession and promise of amendment, which is recorded, *Chap.*10.*v.* 11,12.&c. yet they returned to it againe the second time, as wee finde in *Malachy*, who lived the last of the Prophets, and after this prayer of *Ezra*. For *Chap.*2.12. the Prophet sayes, *An abomination is committed in Ierusalem, for Iudah hath marryed the daughter of a strange god*: and then followes

lowes the aggravation, *v.* 13. *This ye have done again*, that is, the second time, and in that respect are challenged to deale treacherously; and that also in respect they had repented of it the first time, *covering the Altar with teares, with weeping, and crying out*, as *Malachy* there speakes: so as *God regardeth not your offerings any more.* And therefore also *Psa.*78.40. *How oft did they* (saith hee, as aggravating their sins) by murmuring *provoke the Lord?* and *Numb.*14.22. God reckons up, and mentions the times of their sinning, how often they had thus sinned, as an aggravation of

of them, *They have tempted me these ten times.*

4. He may fall into the same sinne againe and againe, untill hee hath recovered himselfe, and his peace fully, by a thorow repentance, but yet seldome after. *Lot* committed incest two nights together; but the orifice of his lust, was not yet stopped by repentance; the wound was not closed, and so bled againe afresh; but when it is healed once, and the heart made perfect with God, and divorced from that sinne, and entred into Communion with God againe, then though it may fall out, yet a man more hardly

4. *Cautio*

hardly returnes. A woman that is gone from her husband may play the whore a long while with him shee ran away withall, till her husband fetches her againe: but to runne often away, after receiving againe, is intolerable. That is not so ordinary in Gods child.

5. *Cautiõ* 5. Though wee can hardly set limits to say when, or when not, this shall fall out from the degrees of mens repentings: as that if they have such or such a degree of repentance, that they fall no more: yet we may further consider a difference of their returnings to God, and repentings; and of Gods

Gods speaking peace.

1. Of their *Repentings*: some are more imperfect, and but as it were thawings of the minde a little, by meanes of a little Sunshine of Gods love: some are more thorow and deepe; that recover a man, and put him into a sound and healthfull estate. As for example, a man in an ague hath well dayes, yet his fits returne, and it may bee they leave him for a month or so; and yet they take him againe, as at Spring and Autumne; which is because all this while his body is not thorowly recovered to a state of health: so is it with a mans heart in respect of his

his lusts, though hee may have many well dayes, wherein hee may eate his meate, and receive sweetnesse in the word, and ordinances: yet at times his distempers and aguish fits returne, hee being aguish still; but in the end, after the peace of God hath more thorowly established his heart, hee attaines to some setled constant victory over it; and when it doth not prevaile to victory, such aguish fits end usually in consumptions, in which long agues often end: as in Temporaries, in whom, sinne overcomming GODS striving with them, it eates all good beginnings out:

out; but if they belong to GOD, then usually that aguish distemper is in the end, by a more thorough repentance, so healed, as that they attaine to more victory, and security against it than any other sinne; that as in those other kinde of tentations, it often falls out, that, that which a man doubteth of most, hee comes in the end to bee most assured of, and to doubt no more; so also here, a man becomes most freed from that sinne, hee was long exercised with, of all other. So also

2. For Gods dealings with his, there is much difference therein to bee found:

found : there are ſome kinds of ſpeaking peace by God, and meltings of the heart of his people, which yet are not of that force as to overcome, but wherein God doth but (as it were) ſtrive with them ; which ſtrivings doe ever and anon worke their hearts to a repentance, and that true, and ſerious : which yet is not ſo deepe, and thorow, nor ſo healing the heart at the bottome, as it ſhould. For GOD ſometimes uſeth more imperfect kinde of ſtrivings, even with his owne children, about ſome particular ſinne they are to leave, which doe not ſo fully, at firſt prevaile, and over-

overcome in them; which God doth, to let them see the running issue of their natures, how grace would *runne* out at it, (as the Apostle speakes) and overcome grace in them, if hee should let it alone: and so, lets out upon his child after many yeeres some lust, which had beene long downe, which puts him to it exceedingly, so that hee is in hazzard to bee undone, and is put into fearcs of it; and yet God visiteth his spirit by fits, and *per intervalla* at times strives with him; and though hee falls, yet hee puts under his hand, and gives him well dayes, and some comfortable visitations; Heb. 2. 1.

tions; yet ſuch as are not deepe enough to worke him fully off from it. For, as God ſtrives with wicked men, ſo hee ſometimes ſtrives with his owne alſo; which may ſeeme to bee the true meaning of that ſpeech, *Gen. 6.* where having mentioned the ſinne of his owne children, *ver.* 2. That the Sonnes of God tooke to them wives of that wicked ſeed of *Cain*, he ſayes, *My Spirit ſhall not alwayes ſtrive with man, for that* [*he alſo*] *is but fleſh:* Hee meanes not this, of all mankinde, for hee ſayes, [*hee alſo*] is but fleſh: now, with what other creatures, doth hee joyne them in this compariſon,

pariſon, but with others of the ſonnes of men: ſo as the meaning is, I ſee my Children, that they alſo are corrupt, and degenerate as well as the reſt of mankinde, and my Spirit hath ſtriven with them. In which ſtriving, GOD lets them ſee, how if hee did not in the end, ſhew forth his free love to the full, in the reſcuing of them, and healing their backſliding, they would bee undone: ſo as, in the end, through his grace which is ſufficient, they obtaine the greateſt conqueſt over that luſt of any other; when the heart is once throughly awakened, and ſetled in a tho-

row peace. And as, thoſe doubts they were moſt troubled with once, (which though they had at times ſome light againſt, yet by fits did ſtill ariſe) are yet in the end, ſo overcome, as they ariſe no more, but they enjoy the greateſt freedome from them: So it is often herein. And theſe *ſtrivings to not overcomming*, I reſemble to the thawings of the Ice, in a great froſt, as when in the day time, the Sunne ſhines, and in the Sunſhine it thaweth a little: but yet, ſo as at night, or in the ſhade it freezeth, when ſometimes, the weather alſo begins to change for a night, and yet falls a freezing

freezing againe: so here, there is not such a thorow shedding abroad the love of God in the heart, as should make a thorow generall thaw, to the purpose as wee say; and so, when the heat of that is withdrawne, it freezeth againe: but in the end there comes a more thorow and generall thaw, and change that carries all away, melts the heart, and so alters the temper and constitution of the weather, (as I may so speake) as it freezeth no more. And such a thawing of his heart had *David*, when *Nathan* came to him, and not afore; though it may bee hee had those lesser

relentings often before.

But let those that are in such a case, take *heed they bee not hardened through the deceitfulnesse of sinne*: and of all the times that passe over you in your lives, these are the most climacteriall, and criticall, and most dangerous: For God *will not alwayes strive*, but if thou beest his child, if such thawings will not do it, hee will use some great afflictions, in the end to divorce the heart, and thy *sinne*; his love will one way or other overcome thee, and in the end prevaile. As when *Israel went on stubbornely in the way of his heart*, (sayes God) *I have seene his wayes and will heale him*

him and guide him, Esay 57. and the Lord may so heale thee, as those lusts of all other shall not in that grosse maner, breake forth any more. And in those times, when God dealeth thus with him, a man will after say, that in such passages of his life, hee had more free love spent on him, then in all his life time, before or after: and when hee is freed and healed, he will be more thankfull, and fearfull than ever before, or then otherwise he would have been; and so get ground by his stumblings. If any of you, being now in such a conflict as this, in such a vicissitude and chance of war:

If yet thou findeſt a conſtant fight againſt thy *ſinne*; and that thoſe breakings, and meltings of thy heart by God, doe win ground of it; and that the comforts, and hope, which at times are vouchſafed, doe ſtrengthen, *and ſtabliſh thy heart in well doing*: as 2 *Theſſ.* 2. *ult.* and makes thee more fearefull, every time thou riſeſt, than ever; ſo as to looke upon another fit if it ſhould come, (which knowing the deceitfulneſſe of the heart, thou feareſt,) as the fit of ſome great ſickneſſe, leſt it ſhould returne againe; eſteeming it as the greateſt croſſe that can befall thee; which thou

thou wouldeſt buy off with thy blood; and bleedeſt moſt of all to thinke that thou haſt ſo unconſtant a heart, which as it hath abuſed Gods love formerly, ſo thou feareſt, will doe ſo againe; if thus thou goe on to fight it out, the love of God will in the end overcome in thee: but if thou findeſt that thoſe encouragements frō God, doe through thy corruption, (which turnes Gods grace into wantonneſſe) nouriſh thy luſts, and make thee leſſe fearefull againſt the next time; and thy heart harder, and ſecurer, and to ſlight *ſinne* more, becauſe thou haſt beene ſo oft viſited from

on high, and pardoned: thy case is dangerous, and may prove desperate.

6. Though he may returne, yet not presently: *Luke* 5. *last. Hee that hath tasted old wine, doth not straightway drinke, and desire new*: not whilest the love of God, and the taste, and relish of it is fresh in his mouth: when the impression is worne out indeed, and begins to be forgotten, then haply he may returne.

Vse. To conclude with the use of this point; If it be folly to runne into the same *sinne*, though wee repent of it afterwards: then, what folly is it in them that utterly fall away;

way; and after they *have beene enlightned, and tasted of the good Word of God*, then fall againe to the pleasures of *sinne* and never repent of them: as many doe; that come, and try a little, what is in religion, and the wayes of God, and then returne againe to their vomits, and never returne to piety againe. *Foolish soules, who hath bewitched you? are yee so foolish, that having begun in the spirit, yee end in the flesh?* as *Gal.* 3. 3. *Folly* indeed: to spend the harvest of your time in seeking God, and then to leave him, when you are about to take leave of the pleasures of *sinne*. Alas poore

poore soules, whither will yee goe? doe you ever thinke to have such a GOD againe? *Thou hast the words of eternall life*, said the Disciples to Christ: and as *Saul* said to his servants, to keepe them from falling away unto *David*; *Can the sonne of Iesse give you vineyards, and make you Captaines of thousands?* 1 *Sam.* 22. 7. So, can the world give you that peace that I can give you, may Christ say to you; yea and heaven besides hereafter? Is the devill, with all the wages of *sinne* you post after, able to make you amends? You thereby dishonour God in returning to *sinne*, and

and bring an evill report upon the good land; and discredit your Master in changing your service; but withall you befoole your selves most: you *returne to folly*. For even that which you thinke to gaine the worlds good word and opinion by, even that you lose: for, though they make a spoile of you, and triumph in such, *and glory in their flesh a while*: yet they never inwardly think well of such an one; nor truely love him. A back slider, is like luke-warme water, having beene once heated, which good men spue out, and evill men regard not; for what use can indeed bee made

made of it? *Like salt that hath lost* its *savour it is good for nothing but the dunghill.* Like one that hath beene maried, but lives divorced; shee is undone for her mariage ever after. Such is the condition of those that fall away and repent not: You who have but turned unto folly, and are not growne to a despising and despiting Gods wayes, *Returne oh Shulamite, returne.* And you that have peace and communion with God, take heed you doe not lose him, you will never have such a God again.

FINIS.

ST Cat. 12034

Aggravation
OF
SINNE:
AND
SINNING
Against { *KNOWLEDGE.* / *MERCIE.*

Delivered in ſeverall Sermons upon divers occaſions.

BY
THO: GOODVVIN. *B. D.*

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